

**OLD SLEUTH'S OWN.**

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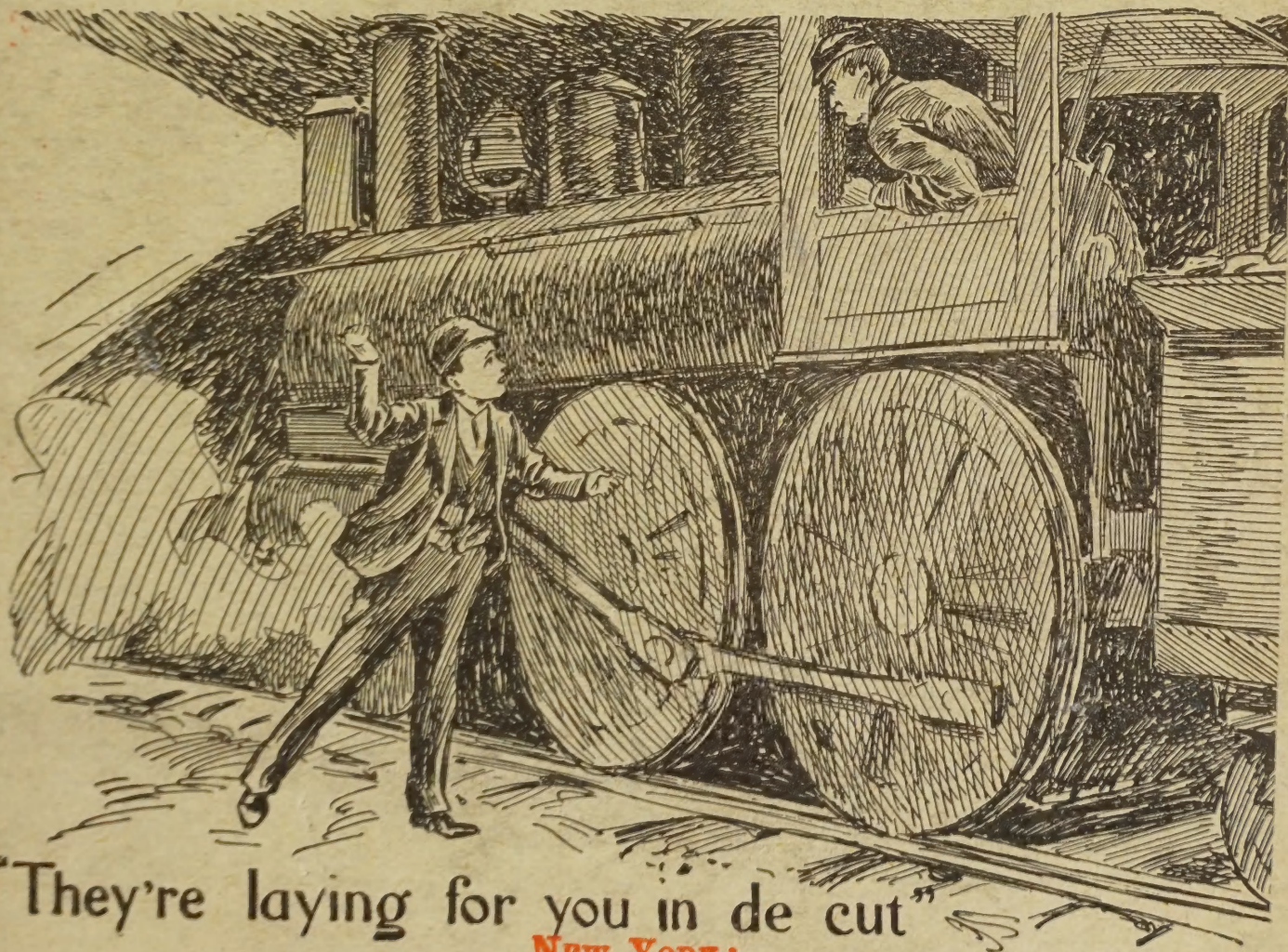
# THE YOUNG ENGINEER;

OR,

## Making Her Spin.

A TALE OF PLUCK AND DARING.

By **OLD SLEUTH.**



"They're laying for you in de cut"

NEW YORK:

**J. S. OGILVIE PUBLISHING COMPANY.**

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# THE YOUNG ENGINEER -

OR,

## MAKING HER SPIN.

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### A TALE OF PLUCK AND DARING.

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BY OLD SLEUTH,

*Author of All the Famous Old Sleuth Stories.*

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#### CHAPTER I.

THE WARNING—A TRAP—A BOY'S DARING—MAKING HER  
SPIN THROUGH THE GAP.

"THEY are laying for you in the cut."

The train had just drawn up to the station. The alert engineer stood with hand on the throttle when he heard a voice beside the cab. He leaned over through the look-out opening of his cab, and there stood a lad of about fifteen or sixteen.



"What do you want?" demanded the engineer in an impatient tone, for he had been behind time and during the fifty miles over which he had driven his engine he had been compelled to make her spin.

"They are laying for you in the cut."

"Who is laying for me in the cut?"

"The train wreckers," came the startling answer.

A cold chill ran through the veins of the sturdy engineer. He was a brave man, but fully comprehended the magnitude of the danger, if the statement of the pale-faced lad who made the announcement in tones of trembling excitement told the truth.

"Who are you?"

"My name is Jack Warren."

"Where do you live?"

"I haven't got any home; I'm tramping."

"And the wreckers are lying in wait for me in the cut?"

"Yes."

"How do you know?"

"I heard them laying their plans. They intend to put ties on the road and send the train flying; if you discover the barricade they will shoot you down in your cab; that is their plan."

"How many are there of them?"

"Seven or eight; they are desperate fellows and all well armed."

The engineer was thoughtful. He scanned the face of the lad who had made the startling announcement; it was an honest face. The station where his train had been stopped was an out-of-the-way place. It was well on toward midnight; no force could be mustered there to face the wreckers. The train hands were unarmed; possibly the conductor might have a weapon. He had a revolver on his own person, but what could he and the



conductor hope to do against seven or eight desperate brigands? And as for the passengers, they would merely yell in a wild panic and desert the train were a revelation of the danger made known to them. In a mechanical sort of way the engineer asked:

"Lad, what would you advise me to do?"

"I've been thinking about that."

"Well, what is your conclusion?"

"The wreckers are in hiding; they are several hundred feet away from the obstruction."

"Well?"

"I've an idea I can steal down in the darkness and jerk off the ties and signal you; then you can let her spin and pass along."

"But what will become of you?"

"I reckon I can look out for myself."

"You look like a truthful lad."

"Thank you; but if I weren't telling you the truth why would I say anything? I ain't in with those fellows."

"How can you signal me?"

"Give me a couple of lanterns. If I show a white light let her spin—the road will be clear. If I show a red light back down here to the station. That's all you can do."

It was a simple proposition and yet practicable, and the engineer, believing the boy was honest, thought he would be even more reliable in carrying out his part of the desperate enterprise than an ordinary man; and then again the engineer, who, like all the members of his profession, was a kindly man, appreciated more clearly the lad's danger than the lad did himself. He knew that were the boy captured he would be strangled as a hunter would strangle a wild pigeon. He knew there was money in the express cab and only one man—a decided non-combatant—was in charge of the treasure packages. Indeed, it was a road where such an event as a raid by train



wreckers was decidedly unlooked for. The conductor had given the signal to start, but the engineer hesitated before putting the turn on his throttle valve. There remained to him one alternative: he could hold his train until morning, but then there would follow an investigation, and no doubt it would be asserted that he was a coward, that he had quailed from carrying his train forward because of the unsupported tale of a lying boy. It often occurs that men holding responsible positions are placed in similar dilemmas. Did he go forward with his train and encounter a wreck he would receive less blame than to hold his train and be unable to prove the fact that it was to avoid a wreck. He signaled to the conductor and stated the case as presented. The conductor, although a brave man, became excited and nervous, but after a few moments' consultation it was decided to give the lad, Jack Warren, the lanterns and let him go forward, and the lad said:

"If you don't see any lights you may know that I've been laid out, and take it the same as a red signal; but if I am alive you will see the red or white light and you will know what to do. And see here; if you have a shooter let me take it. I may have use for it."

"This is a great lad if he is honest," said the conductor.

"I am honest, sir, and if you'll put trust in me I'll save this train. Remember a white light means, 'let her spin;' a red light, 'back down;' no signal also means 'back down,' but it's two to one you'll see the white light."

"What makes you think you will be able to show the white light?"

"Because those fellows think they've got a dead sure thing. They are not looking that you will get a warning; they are just calculating you will go rushing right into the ties and everything will go to smash. I tell you, I



know what I am about. I can yank the ties off the track, give the signal, and you can let her spin and go past the danger line before they know what has happened."

"And what will become of you?"

"Oh, I'll look out for myself. I know how to manage. I'll let you go clear and get away unless I have awful bad luck."

"How long before I can start up?"

"In about three minutes; come down easy, blow your whistle until you get near the cut, then look out for your signal and you will know what to do."

The lad started down the track, and the conductor remarked:

"That is a remarkable boy, but I think we had better send down and investigate."

"All right, sir; do as you think best, but my advice is to wait and learn what the lad will do."

"We are running a great risk."

"That is true; but where will we be if we hold the train here? We will not be able to verify the boy's story and will appear very ridiculous."

"You think, then, it is better to chance the run?"

"I do; and we will say nothing about it in case we go through all right."

"But have we the right to risk the lives of the passengers?"

"We will not risk their lives. I will run down, and if I get the signal, make her spin, that's all. If I don't get a signal I can back down."

"All right; we'll chance it."

The engineer sounded his bell, shot forth the usual shrill whistle, and an instant later the train was moving down the track. The conductor, who was a brave man, remained on the engine with the engineer and his fireman. There were three of them, and being forewarned



they were prepared to make a fight. Soon right ahead there showed a white light; the lad had cleared the track. The steam was turned on, the engine dashed ahead. The engineer did "make her spin," and an instant later the boy's warning was verified. Just beyond the point where the signal light had been shown several men were seen as the great locomotive flew past, and shots were fired into the cab. No one was hit, and the train went thundering on its way carrying its load of passengers safely toward their destination. At the first station beyond the train was stopped and the conductor gave notice of the intended wreck. A party of men were armed, and boarding a shuttle car started down the track. They arrived near the spot where the wreck was to have been perpetrated, and alighting from their car proceeded down the track on the alert to meet the desperadoes. The latter had fled, but the evidences of their recent presence and purpose were plainly apparent on every side. The statement of the lad who had given the warning was fully verified. The men searched for the lad, moving cautiously, and some time had been spent when one of the men halted and, calling to his companions, pointed to a pool of fresh blood which had been revealed under the glare of his lantern. These searchers had heard the story, and when all were gathered over the bloody trail one of them remarked in a low tone and with great solemnity:

"The lad has paid the forfeit of his faithfulness with his life."

That was the general conclusion, and they determined to search for the lad's body. Again moving with great caution, one of the men—the one who had first found the trail of blood—went further than the others, and soon there fell upon his ear a groan. He stopped and listened, then signaled to his comrades, and when they joined him he said:



"Listen!"

The men did listen and the groans were distinctly heard, and one of the men remarked:

"That is a man groaning, not a lad."

They secured their weapons ready for instant use, and advanced very slowly. There was a chance that in case the wounded man was one of the wreckers his pals might not be very far off. The men who were searching were brave Western fellows and ready for a fierce fight if it became necessary. In a thicket some three hundred feet away from where they had first discovered the blood marks they came upon a wounded man. He was a fierce-looking rascal, although in answer to their questions he claimed to be an honest man who had come suddenly upon the desperadoes and had been wounded by them. A litter was rigged up and the man carried to the town on the shuttle car, where he persisted in his story, and later he was placed under the care of a doctor in the jail, although the prosecuting officer for the county admitted that the man could not be held unless more positive evidence was obtained against him.

As our readers will remember, Jack Warren had started down the track. The lad was a keen, resolute fellow, as circumstances will prove. He moved rapidly, and upon arriving at the place where the obstructions had been placed he dexterously proceeded to remove them. He had just succeeded when he saw the headlight of the approaching train. He waved his signal and, as has been recorded, the train sped by in safety, and then the wreckers, cursing and yelling, came forth from their covert. Jack started to steal away, but one of the men saw and pursued him, and finally fired at him, when the lad turned and with the weapon which had been loaned to him he aimed and fired in return. The wrecker fell and the brave youth glided away in the darkness. The com-



panions of the wreckers heard the shot and ran to the place where their comrade fell. The man was speechless. They thought he was dying, and also suspected that an armed posse was on their track, and they fled, leaving their companion to die. Meantime Jack had gotten away. He was proud of his deed and his heart bounded with exultation at the thought that he had been the means, through a lucky accident in the first place and a deed of daring later on, of saving the lives of possibly a score of people. As he walked on through the night, fearing lest he might be pursued, he muttered:

“I’ve done one good deed; I may not live to do another. I am thankful.”

It was fully an hour before the lad felt that he could lie down and rest. He had halted in a clump of dense forest, and believing that all pursuit had ceased he lay down to rest

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## CHAPTER II.

SOMETHING ABOUT JACK—THE STORY OF A LAD WHO HAD DETERMINED TO CARVE OUT HIS OWN FORTUNE—A TRAGEDY AND OTHER INCIDENTS.

JACK WARREN’S father was a machinist, a worthy, ingenious, and hard-working man who had spent a great deal of time and thought over many mechanical improvements. He was the husband of a bright and loving wife. The father had one son, our hero. He was an ambitious man, and for the sake of his wife more than in behalf of himself he had striven to invent something that would bring him a fortune, and one day he returned to his home at midday, his face all aglow and his eyes beaming. To his wife he said:



“I’ve accomplished it at last! Ours has been a hard struggle for existence, but soon all anxiety will be over. I have received a patent for an improvement which will soon bring me a fortune. My dear, you shall yet live in a fine house, have silk gowns and diamonds, and ride in your carriage, and we shall be so happy.”

At the time Jasper Warren made the statement we have recorded Jack, his only son, was a lad of thirteen, but Jack was a very remarkable lad. His mother had been a teacher in an Eastern seminary. She was a finely educated woman and she had carefully superintended the education of her son, and at the age of thirteen her boy was as far advanced in his studies as youths usually are at the age of seventeen and eighteen. Jack was a precocious lad and he fully comprehended the importance of the story of his father’s success, and he was correspondingly happy, as even at that very early age he had formed great plans as concerned his future career in life, and he fully appreciated the advantage it would be to him if his father should secure a competence and become able to sustain him in his preparatory studies. Jasper Warren, as stated, told the story of his success to his wife and son. He stated that his employer was to have a limited interest in the patent and advance the capital for putting the invention on the market. Jasper Warren was a happy man. He had a sister living some six miles away across country, and he told his wife that as he had a day off he would take advantage of it and pay a visit to his sister, whom he loved very dearly, as she had been a warm friend to him according to her ability during all his early struggles. Mrs. Warren bade her husband adieu with cheerfulness and Jack waved his hand good-by, and happiness reigned on every side. Jasper did not expect to arrive at his home in returning until well on toward midnight, and his wife watched him as he strode away until his strong,



manly form had disappeared over the hills beyond the town; then with a happy heart she returned to her household duties. Night came apace, and in due time she and her son sat down to their meal and greatly missed the stalwart form and brave, honest face of husband and father, who was rarely absent from his home at meal-time. At the usual hour Jack retired to bed and the wife sat down to await the return of her husband. She was a comely woman, possessing a refined and intelligent face, on which in the earlier part of the evening there were no lines of anxiety; but later a shadow settled upon it, for the hour of midnight arrived and her husband, usually so prompt and certain in his calculations, had not appeared. One o'clock struck and still Jasper Warren had not appeared. The wife and mother sat pale and motionless; her husband was usually, as stated, so prompt and regular. And so the night passed, and only one hope remained to Mrs. Warren. There had arisen a thunder-storm during the night; it was possible that the stream had become swollen and the bridge carried away, and her husband had thus been prevented from making his way home. Jack arose bright and early and descended to the sitting-room. He was bright and happy, and expected to greet his father and ask concerning his aunt. He saw his mother sitting pale and with a look of anguish upon her face. He ceased whistling; a shadow overspread his own face. He ran to his mother and asked:

"Mother, where is father?"

"He has not returned, my son."

"How is that?"

"I do not know. There was a storm during the night. The bridge may have been washed away, and it is possible he was compelled to go around by the way of G——."

A moment Jack meditated and then said:

"Mother, *something* had happened."



“Why do you think so, my son?”

“If father had been compelled to go around by the way of G—— he would have been home by this time. He knows how you would worry. He would have gotten here somehow ere this. Either he stayed over or something has happened.”

“Jack, borrow Manders’ horse and ride down to the run and see if the bridge has been carried away.”

Jack was soon mounted and dashed away down to the bridge, and his heart fell when he saw that it stood solid and uninjured. The incident of the storm consequently had had nothing to do with the non-return of Jasper Warren. Jack was well mounted and rode forward at a gallop to his aunt’s house, and his heart was filled with dismay when he learned that his father had started for home at a little after ten o’clock; and barring accident, he should have been home at the time he had named—between half-past eleven and twelve o’clock, permitting a leisurely return. The lad only stopped to announce that his father had not arrived at his home, when he remounted and galloped back bearing the sad facts to his mother. At once the alarm was given. Jack went to his father’s employer and announced the non-return of his parent. Mr. Blandry became excited and exhibited considerable feeling and distress. He at once called on Mrs. Warren and sought to console her. He then organized a search party and an effort was made to get track of the missing man. The search continued throughout the day, but not the first clue was obtained, and sorrow filled the heart of Mrs. Warren. She knew her husband too well to suspect for one moment aught else than that some accident had befallen him. On the day following the search was renewed, and like the first it proved barren of any certain result. There were many theories advanced, and Mr. Blandry was foremost in suggestions, and every one ad-



mired the zeal he had displayed in the search for his employee. Mr. Blandry was not a rich man. He had always been looked upon as a hard-working manufacturer; his capital was small and he was compelled to be very frugal, and acted as his own foreman. He was a quiet, reticent man, made no friendships, and never gave any confidences. He had always lived a correct and sober life before his friends and neighbors, among whom he had resided for nearly seventeen years, and there was nothing to say against him, very little in his favor. He was a negative sort of man.

A week passed and nothing was seen or heard of Jasper Warren. The prevailing belief was that he had fallen from the bridge during the violent storm, that his body had been carried down to the river by a sudden flood, and so had finally drifted out to sea. Mrs. Warren was reluctantly forced to believe that the theory was correct and that she was a widow; that her husband had been thus taken from her at the very moment when success and prosperity appeared to be assured. It was a hard blow. He had lived just long enough to make his success apparent, announce it, and then he died. The widow—as it was accepted that Mrs. Warren really was—had been too earnest in her search for news of her husband to make any inquiries as concerned her husband's interest in the great patent. He had not given her any details beyond the announcement that his employer was to hold a *small* interest as a guarantee for the necessary capital in the production of the new article or improvement. And so other weeks passed until a month had elapsed, when one evening Mr. Blandry appeared at the home of Mrs. Warren and with as much delicacy as possible showed her a newspaper clipping concerning the finding of a body in the river some fifty miles distant from the village where Mr. Jasper Warren had resided and



from which he had so mysteriously disappeared. Mrs. Warren had schooled herself to expect just such news at any moment, and she was outwardly calm, although her heart was breaking. Seeing that the supposed widow received the news with comparative composure, Mr. Blandry by degrees imparted further information, and finally the fact was disclosed that the body was mutilated beyond all possible recognition, but the clothes were those of Jasper Warren. Indeed, the machinist's watch and other articles had been found in the clothing, which established the identity beyond all possible doubt. Mr. Blandry had gone to the place, having received a notification as the employer of the man, and he finally announced that the identification was complete and the body was on the way back to the former home of the dead man.

Mrs. Warren said little; she was bowed in anguish, and permitted Mr. Blandry to act in the matter according to his best judgment. He offered to defray all the expenses and persuaded Mrs. Warren not to ask to gaze upon the face of the dead, saying that the funeral would take place from the church; and thus the matter was arranged. The funeral did take place, Mrs. Warren put on the widow's weeds, and the tragic death of Jasper Warren became a memory.

About two weeks after the funeral August Blandry called upon Mrs. Warren. He stated that he had called upon business, and in due time opened up his business by showing a contract signed by Jasper Warren in the presence of a witness, wherein he surrendered all interest in his patent for a weekly consideration, such consideration to be payable only during the time that such Jasper Warren superintended the manufacturing of the patented article. All right and interest, for a nominal bonus and the above-mentioned consideration, he had assigned to Mr. Blandry. The signature was all right and Mrs.



Warren accepted the contract as a *bona-fide* act of her husband, little knowing at the time the great value of her husband's invention. No one knew of the invention save herself and Mr. Blandry; they only knew that a contract had been made and nothing more. In fact, as the invention had not been put upon the market and developed no one knew much about it, nor was any great store attached to it. Later on, when its true value became known, Mr. Blandry was in absolute possession and all question as to his title was seemingly settled.

Mr. Blandry was apparently very kind and considerate. He paid over to Mrs. Warren the bonus named in the contract and offered to take Jack into his employ; indeed, apparently, as intimated, he acted with the utmost fairness, kindness, and consideration. The story of Blandry's kindness went abroad and was a great surprise to his neighbors, as he did not bear the reputation of being a liberal man. It was indeed a revelation, and the widow was exceedingly grateful and hopeful. Her husband having been taken from her, all her love and interest settled on her bright, brave son. It was determined that Jack should remain at school another year, and to the surprise of every one Blandry offered to make the widow an allowance for his maintenance.

A few months passed and it became known that Blandry was on the road to the making of a great fortune. He commenced to put up new buildings; he had no difficulty in obtaining every dollar he needed. The general belief was that Blandry was the inventor of the patented article, and every one looked upon him as a very fortunate man. As stated, several months passed. Then news of the new invention had gone abroad. Already Blandry was recognized as a coming millionaire, and no one knew but the lone widow that it was the genius of her poor dead husband that had produced the article which promised to bring to Blandry his prospective great fortune.



One night the widow and her son were sitting alone. Jack had returned from school for a short vacation. Mr. Blandry had been comparatively liberal and they had not known want; in a modest way all their wants were supplied, and Blandry was, as intimated, becoming lauded for his generosity and kindly consideration.

"Mother," said Jack, "do you really believe Blandry is our sincere friend?"

"We have every reason to believe so, my son. He has been kind since your father's death."

"You think so, mother?"

"We have the evidence, my son."

"You think so, mother?"

Jack spoke in a strange tone and repeated his query in a very peculiar manner.

"Yes, my son, I am compelled to think so."

"I don't agree with you, mother," said Jack suddenly in a very emphatic tone.

"Why, my son, what makes you think differently?"

"Simply, mother, because I do not believe that my father was a fool."

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### CHAPTER III.

A STARTLING SUSPICION—JACK BETRAYS GREAT DISCERNMENT—CONTINUED INCIDENTS OF GREAT INTEREST.

MRS. WARREN'S face assumed an ashy paleness, and later its occasion will be explained. Calmly she said:

"No, my son, your father was not a fool, but a very clever-headed man."

"Yes, mother, and I tell you he would not have striven all his life to perfect such a valuable improvement only to give it away at the last moment to a man like Blandry."



The mother's voice trembled as she said:

"Your father had no capital."

"No capital was required, mother; the value of the invention was so self-evident capitalists would have advanced all the money needed. They have done so for Blandry. I tell you father was not a fool; he knew that, and he never would have given away such a valuable patent for mere weekly wages. He would have held some interest—some permanent interest."

Mrs. Warren gazed in amazement. Her son, less than fifteen years of age, was displaying a discernment and clear-headedness that was wonderful. She had turned pale, and why? The very idea that her son had openly promulgated had forced itself upon her attention; she had never given a hint to any one, and yet there had arisen in her mind a suspicion; and here her son, a mere lad, announced that a suspicion had developed in his mind. The mother had thought the whole matter over previously and had determined in her own mind that as her husband was dead the real truth would never be known, and she had concluded that it would be useless to assert any claim. She could never establish its truth and she would only make enemies. A long time she meditated, and then said:

"My son, I do not believe your suspicion is warranted by fact. What you state is true, but your father may have had verbal promises and may have been induced to sell out his rights in the patent. His death releases Mr. Blandry from compliance with verbal promises, but he appears to be disposed to be very kind to us."

"Kind to us, mother?"

"Yes."

"Do you think so?"

"He has seen that we want for nothing in a reasonable and modest way."



"Yes, mother, but that man will make millions out of the thing. People do not even give my father the credit of being the real inventor. A little time, and not only all the money, but all the credit will go to Blandry. Mother, I believe father has been robbed—robbed since his death."

"Hush, my son."

"I will tell the truth."

"Jack, if you say abroad what you have said to me we will be ruined. Blandry, instead of being our friend, will become our enemy."

There came a strange light in Jack's eyes; his words and deportment were a revelation to his mother. He was displaying the clearness and discernment of a man of mature years. He said:

"Mother, my father was not a fool, neither am I."

"Promise me, my son, that you will not repeat to others what you have said to me."

"Certainly I will not repeat it, *at present*, mother."

"Do not even hint at anything of the sort."

"Certainly not, mother; no, not *at present*."

The lad put a singular emphasis on the words "*at present*."

"Never, my son, no, never say one word, no matter what the truth may be. It is too late now to set matters right."

"You think so, mother?"

"I do."

"I don't," came the blunt avowal.

"Oh, my son, I fear——."

"Fear what, mother?"

"That you will do something rash and very indiscreet."

"You can dismiss your fear, mother, for I will not mask what I say. I will say nothing at present, but I will study and watch. I may get the evidence; if I do, then



I will say something; if I do not our suspicion shall be our secret."

"You can do nothing, my son, and in seeking evidence you may betray your suspicion and then we will be ruined."

"I will never betray anything, mother, but if I ever get the evidence then I will declare the truth and establish it; but, mother, nothing at present. You can trust me; I am a man now. You need not fear; I have discretion."

"My son, I am very sorry."

"Sorry, mother?"

"Yes."

"Why are you sorry?"

"I fear you are laying out for yourself a path that will bring you nothing but unhappiness."

"How, mother?"

"You will become absorbed in the establishment of an insolvable mystery to the sacrifice of everything else."

"You think so, mother?"

"Yes, my son."

"I am to go as an apprentice to Blandry?"

"Yes."

"That's all right; I'll go and I'll be mum. I'll only keep my eyes and ears open. I may learn something, I may not. If I do, all right; if I don't I'll burn no midnight oil in meditation. But, mother, let me ask you one question: Did you notice the signature to that contract?"

"I saw, my son, but through my tears."

"You did not study it?"

"No, my son."

"I did."

The mother's face assumed an ashen hue as she ejaculated:



"Oh, Jack, I fear! I fear!"

There came a strange look to Jack's face; in fact the change of expression was virtually a transformation—a marvelous transformation—as he said:

"Mother, I had my suspicions from the very first moment that I glanced at that contract. I said nothing to you at the time, but I have known from that moment that we were the victims of a fraud."

"Hush, my son."

"Mother, I can prove it."

"You can prove it?"

"Yes."

"No, no."

"I can."

"Oh, my son, already you are lost to happiness; you have become possessed of an idea that will bring you nothing but unhappiness."

"It is not an idea, mother. I know that we have been defrauded."

"You know it?"

"Yes, and I can prove it to you."

"Prove it, my son?"

"Yes, mother, prove it. I can call your attention to one fact and you will be convinced that we have been defrauded."

The mother remained silent a moment and then said:

"Do not prove it, my son."

"Yes, I will prove it. Mark me well, mother. I have suspicions that I will never disclose, but one belief is founded not on a suspicion, but on absolute fact—a fact that can be proved."

"To what do you allude, my son?"

"My father never signed the assignment of that patent. I can prove it."

"You can prove it?"



"I can."

"How?"

"Shall I?"

"Yes, my son."

"The assignment was made on July 19."

"Yes, I noted that."

"It was witnessed the same day at a county town twenty miles distant."

"I did not observe that, my son."

"I did, mother."

"Your father may have gone there to sign it."

"But he did not, mother."

"He did not?"

"He did not."

"How do you know?"

"On the 19th of last July at five o'clock in the morning father and I left home and went hunting. We were together all day and did not return until seven o'clock in the evening."

Mrs. Warren glared as in trembling tones she asked:

"Are you sure of the date, my son?"

"Mother, are you sure on what day in July my birthday comes?"

"On the 19th, my son."

"Yes. And do you remember that on that day my father gave me a book and wrote in it, 'Presented to my son on his fifteenth birthday, July 19th?'"

"Oh, my son!"

"Do you remember that the book was given to me the night before?"

"I do."

"Do you remember that you gave me fifteen kisses that night, saying they were in advance?"

"I do, I do."

"Do you remember that the last words my father said



to me as I started to go up to bed were, 'Remember, my son, we start at five o'clock; you must be up half an hour earlier?' "

"I remember."

"Do you remember he said, 'As it's your birthday commence it early?'" "

"I do."

"And do you remember that we went shooting on the 19th of July?"

"I do; yes, I remember well every incident."

"Then my father did not go to L—— on the 19th of July and attach his signature before a notary to that document of assignment. Mother, I have made a case and furnished the proof; and father knew the full value of his invention. Do you remember that he said to us he had given Blandry a small interest? A small interest is different from a total assignment."

"My son, I am convinced we have been defrauded."

"The wrong done to us, mother, does not stop at a mere defraudment—a greater wrong has been done us."

"But what do you intend to do, my son?"

"Nothing at present, but some day I will decide upon my course. In the mean time I will make the most of my time at school; then I will enter Blandry's employ, and then— Well, mother, then I will decide what I shall do."

A little later and Jack returned to his room, but the mother sat and meditated over the strange interview she had had with her remarkable son. She was delighted with his wonderful display of judgment and discernment, but she looked forward with gloomy forebodings. She could not see how the lad's proofs could be established, and she feared, despite his declaration, that he would devote his life to establishing the truth. She could discern nothing but failure and ruin to her son, and she



resolved to try and persuade him to dismiss the whole matter from his mind forever.

On the following morning Jack descended to the breakfast-room bright, cheerful, and seemingly light-hearted. He made no allusion to the conversation of the previous night, and his mother determined to postpone all her admonitions until he returned home after the conclusion of his school term.

Jack meantime had made notes of all his conclusions, but did dismiss the matter from his mind for the time being. He was determined, as he had stated, to make the most of his time while at school.

In due time the lad's school term ended, and he returned to his native town and called upon Mr. Blandry, announcing his readiness to enter the latter's shop as an apprentice. Mr. Blandry was very kind in his demeanor toward the lad, and said:

"Jack, I've been thinking a great deal about you of late. I must tell you that your father aided me considerably in carrying out my invention, and if he had lived I should have made him superintendent of my factory; but as to you, I think you would make a good doctor. I would recommend that you go to the city, enter a drug store, and learn the practical trade of pharmacist with a view to eventually taking lessons and becoming a doctor."

"You are very kind, sir, to think out my interests so well, but I am determined to learn my father's trade. I shall become a machinist."

"Well, I'll tell you—I speak in your own interests—I might favor you too much in my own business. It might be a good idea for you to go to some other town and serve as an apprentice for a year or two, and then come with me. I will always have a place open for you."

"You are very kind again, Mr. Blandry, but I would prefer to be taken on in your shop, as I cannot leave my mother."



"All right, lad, I will think it over and let you know in a day or two."

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## CHAPTER IV.

JACK PERSISTS AND FINALLY ENTERS BLANDRY'S SHOP—  
A MIDNIGHT RAID—A STRANGE DISCOVERY—AN IN-  
TERRUPTION AND A STRUGGLE.

BLANDRY took two weeks to decide, and then under protest admitted Jack into his factory; and his protest came in the form of a declaration that our hero must expect no favors, but take his chances like any other mechanic.

Thus a year and a half passed. Jack devoted his energies to mastering the art of making machinery, and he betrayed a wonderful aptitude; indeed, the superintendent once incidentally told Mr. Blandry that Jack would make a great engineer some day. The superintendent added:

"He is a queer lad; he never says a word unless spoken to. He acts like a lad who carries a secret and a purpose. His eyes are everywhere; while he pretends to be indifferent he is watching everything, and when he does speak he asks very strange questions; and there is one other singular fact about him I have noticed."

"What is that?"

"You, sir, appear to be the magnet that attracts him. He watches you when you are not aware of it. I believe he admires you for your great success and desires to emulate you."

There came a thoughtful look to Blandry's face. If Jack had been watching him he had been very sly about it, for Mr. Blandry had never noticed the fact himself,



and if the lad was so wary it was just possible that he did have an object; and we will add that there was a possibility which led Mr. Blandry to look upon this surveillance with suspicion and dread, and this view was maintained by a remark that fell involuntarily from the man's lips. When once again alone he muttered:

"It's strange this lad should watch me, and it's strange what an aversion I feel toward him. Why is it I grow chilly when he is near? Why is it I dread and fear him?"

Strange, but at that very instant Jack was near, and he overheard those words so fraught with a weird suggestiveness in line with a purpose he really did have. Jack's face became deathly pale and a fierce light shone in his eyes, and as he walked away he muttered:

"The time approaches when I must act."

For a long time Jack had been revolving a plan in his mind. He desired to get possession of the bill of sale which Blandry had shown to his mother. He did not dare to ask to see it lest he might put the man on his guard. The lad believed the man held the bill of sale as a defense against a possible claim that might some day arise; he believed the bill of sale was concealed in the safe in the office. Being but a lad and ignorant of law, he did not know that there was a legal method for compelling a production of the bill, and even had he known this he would probably have decided upon a different plan, as he had no money to conduct a lawsuit; and a suit at law meant ruin, as Blandry still allowed his mother a small sum per week, but he had diminished the amount so that the widow was reduced to pretty hard straits at times in order to make both ends meet. As Blandry became richer, instead of becoming more liberal and generous he had several times intimated that the allowance was a great tax on him; indeed, he made Mrs. Warren feel very uncomfortable, and he made reductions without one



word of previous notification, so that frequently some of her modest plans for the future were knocked all awry.

Jack had studied well. The superintendent was right—the lad had both a secret and a purpose, and the mutterings of Mr. Blandry decided him to carry out his plan at once. He was a singularly strong youth for his years. He had cultivated his strength and he had prepared himself in various ways for the carrying out of his purpose. He was convinced beyond all possibility of doubt that his father had been robbed, that his mother was enduring privations and humiliations when she should have been honored and living in ease and comfort. The lad at length completed all his plans and actually set upon the night when he would make the attempt to carry out his bold scheme.

There was a watchman in the factory—a man who came on duty at about six o'clock and remained on duty until the foreman arrived in the morning. The man went armed and fully prepared to meet all intruders, and our hero was compelled to take this fact into consideration when arranging his plan. He had resolved to take desperate chances. The risk was great and the consequences in case of failure and discovery would prove terrible, but it was a great stake he was playing for, as at any moment his mother might be thrown aside penniless and without the prospect of one cent of income.

Jack disguised himself, and on the night when his scheme was to be carried out he waited until midnight and then stole through the dark across the bleak moor to the isolated place where the factory buildings stood. Jack had disguised himself—was under cover as a veritable tramp—and arrived at the factory he moved with great caution. It was necessary, as at that moment he was acting the rôle of a burglar—a first-class cracksman. He moved around the factory seeking the watchman. It was



his purpose to get posted concerning the man's movements, as it was necessary to dispose of him before carrying out the main purpose he had in view.

Jack felt like a burglar and acted like one, and his only excuse to himself was his purpose. He felt justified, considering his firm conviction that he was the victim with his mother of a robbery far meaner and more lasting in its consequences than an ordinary burglary.

The lad had moved around several times, when he saw the watchman enter the office. He had arranged to make his own entry into the factory, and once inside he knew he would have little difficulty in proceeding to the office. He approached the office door intending to spring upon the watchman from behind; but, alas! at an unfortunate moment he tripped over a casting and fell forward, making considerable noise. The watchman ran out, a cocked pistol in his hand. Jack had no time to make ready. The watchman would fire at sight. He threw himself forward against the watchman's knees. The latter fell forward and the weapon fell from his grasp and exploded, being at full cock; but the man was game. He rolled over and seized Jack, and a desperate struggle followed. The man was the more powerful, but Jack was the more active. He was like a squirming eel in the man's grasp. The watchman struck him and Jack was compelled to take the blows, but he was "on the lay" for an advantage. Fortune favored him in the wrestle. The watchman struck his head against a sharp casting and the blow partially stunned him. It was our hero's opportunity and he improved it. He had constructed a pair of nippers and he deftly snapped them on the watchman's wrists, and the faithful man lay at his mercy. He was stunned, as stated, and ere he could yell or give an alarm Jack had thrust a gag in his mouth. He also bound the man's feet and the victory lay on his side.



Jack was winded, as the boys say, by the struggle, and he rested a few moments. Having overcome the watchman and knowing all the ins and outs of the factory, he believed he had ample time to proceed undisturbed and carry out his search. He was determined to get possession of the bill of sale—the one that had been shown to his mother. Secretly he had constructed utensils for opening the safe. When he had recovered from the effects of the struggle he entered the office and set to work. He was employed about an hour when at length with an exclamation of triumph he recognized his success. The safe lay open before him and he eagerly commenced pulling out the smaller drawers in search of the paper. He failed up to a certain point and began to fear that he had taken all the risk only to meet with disappointment. He persisted, however, determined to overlook every article in the safe, not cease until fully convinced that the object he sought had been put in some other place. Money lay before him, but he did not touch one cent. It was not money he was after; what he sought was the bill of sale. He overhauled bundle after bundle of papers, and still the particular paper he sought was not found, and after a little he muttered:

“And all this risk for nothing!”

Jack stood contemplating, when his eye fell upon a paper that had fallen to the floor. He picked it up mechanically, and at once gave utterance to a cry of delight. He had found that which he sought. The purported bill of sale was in his possession, and his heart glowed with delight. He felt that half the battle was won. In seeking to gain possession of the paper Jack had a well-defined plan in his mind. He believed in the fraud theory and he reasoned that even though his identity were discovered Blandry would not dare arrest him, but would be forced to a compromise; under any circumstances he



was glad to have the paper in his possession. Having secured it, he set to work to restore all the articles he had taken from the safe, and here again he betrayed a lack of the instincts of an animal and also of long experience. Had he been more experienced he would have known that his identity would be suspected when it was discovered that only the bill of sale had been taken from the safe.

All the articles were duly restored and Jack was prepared to go away, when he heard steps. His heart stood still. He had had one struggle, but he had entered well prepared; but if any one were present or had he been discovered the chances were against him, for the party who may have discovered him would be "on the lay" for him and would have a corresponding advantage.

Jack stood still and listened. He had certainly heard a noise, but it had ceased, and when he listened he heard nothing; all was quiet.

"It may have been a rat," he muttered, and he stepped forth from the office, moving, however, with great caution. He had determined to leave the watchman bound and gagged, thinking the fact might serve as a "blind." He had proceeded half the distance toward a place where he expected to make his exit, when he heard an exclamation, turned, and dodged just in time to escape a death-dealing blow from an iron bar in the hands of some one who had approached from behind. Jack thought quickly. He had a chance to escape.

He did not choose to engage in a second struggle if he could avoid it, and he ran like a deer. Fortunately he knew every wind and turn in the shop, and with but a glimmer of light he could make his way swiftly. He became aware that he was being pursued, and his pursuer called:

"Hold, you rascal, hold! I've recognized you."



Jack did not hold, however, but kept on his way, and there came again a call and a threat:

"Hold, you villain, or I'll shoot!"

Jack made no answer, but sped along, and again there came a voice, calling:

"Jack Warren, halt! I may forgive you; run away and I will have you arrested."

Jack recognized the voice of his pursuer; it was Mr. Blandry, and he called out:

"I will halt outside."

The lad possessed courage. He was armed and accustomed to the use of weapons. He thought very quickly in deciding upon his course, and he also resolved that he would not use his weapon unless compelled to do so in defense of his own life. But one fact was assured: a cocked revolver would prove an excellent protection, and there was a possibility that then and there he might bring about a compromise between Blandry and the heirs of Jasper Warren.

Jack kept upon his way and ran outside to the yard of the factory. A full moon was sailing through the heavens, and stepping off to a spot where he would have clear ground, the lad came to a halt, holding his cocked revolver concealed by his side. A moment and Blandry stepped forth, and his first words were:

"So, Jack Warren I've got you, have I?"

"No, sir, I've got you."

"You've got me?"

"Yes, sir, that is what I said."

Blandry advanced a step, when Jack presented his revolver and said:

"Stand where you are, Mr. Blandry; do not approach nearer to me. If you desire to talk to me stand where you are. I can hear all you have to say."

"What! do you dare dictate to me?"



"Yes, I dare dictate to you, and here is the dictator."

As Jack spoke he held his weapon to an aim.

"So, Mr. Burglar, you came armed and equipped, did you?"

"Yes, I did."

"And do you know that I can send you to jail for the rest of your life?"

"I don't know anything of the kind, sir."

"It is only on your mother's account that I propose to have any words with you."

"Your consideration for my dear mother is all a pretense. I know you, Mr. Blandry—yes, I know you through and through."

"You have burglarized my safe."

"That's true."

"And you admit it?"

"I do."

"And I can identify you. Masters also identified you."

"That's all right."

"If you needed money why did you not come to me?"

"I did not open your safe to get money."

"Oh, you didn't, eh?"

"No, sir."

"And what was your object?"

"I wanted to secure the proofs of your villainy."

"What! how dare you?"

"That's right, but I know what I am talking about, sir. Yes, I opened your safe to secure the proofs of your rascality, and I've succeeded."

Jack, seeing that he had been identified, had determined to assume a bold stand.

"You are a misguided boy."

Jack was encouraged. He was a wonderfully shrewd lad and he discerned that Blandry met his fearful charges in a very mild manner. From this our hero argued that



the man was guilty and that a knowledge of his guilt made a coward of him.

"I am very sorry for you, Jack."

"Are you, sir?"

"I am, really, and I have been a good friend to you and your mother."

"Have you?"

"You know I have, Jack."

"I don't see it."

"Jack, some one has made a fool of you; some one has put a wild scheme in your head. Now come, lad, we will be friends. Tell me all about it and I will excuse you because I believe you have been put up to this by others. I will not prosecute you and I will keep your secret, but if you want me to do so you must make a clean breast of it and tell me all about it; tell me who put this wild scheme into your head. Come, lad, tell me all."

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## CHAPTER V.

JACK TELLS MR. BLANDRY SOME STARTLING FACTS—A VILLAIN FOILED IN ONE DIRECTION SEEKS TO WIN IN ANOTHER—OUR HERO PROVES HIS COURAGE, WISDOM, AND DETERMINATION—A GREAT GAME IS INAUGURATED.

"So you want me to tell you something," said Jack in a jeering tone.

Every moment the lad had evidence of his advantage, and furthermore absolute moral proof that all his suspicions were justified, and that indeed he and his mother were the victims of a gross fraud.

"What do you want me to tell you?"



"First tell me who put it into your head to turn burglar."

"Do you think I am a burglar?"

"I don't think it, Jack—I know it. I have proof. More, I have witnesses. I hold you in my power, but for your poor mother's sake I am willing to spare you provided you make me your friend in the only way that you can."

"It is better that you make me your friend, Mr. Blandry."

The manufacturer made one step nearer the lad, who stepped back, and again leveling his revolver, said:

"I warn you stand where you are."

"What did you take from my safe?"

"The evidence of your crime," came the prompt answer.

"Poor boy! who has bewitched you with some false idea?"

"No one."

"Come, come, Jack, tell me who prompted you to commit this crime."

"I have not committed a crime; I am acting in the interest of justice."

"Nonsense! some enemy of yours and my enemy also is making a fool of you."

"No one is making a fool of me, sir."

"What is the idea you have in your head?"

"It is not an idea. I have the proof that my father never assigned to you his patent."

Blandry attempted to laugh, but the laugh died on his lips. He became serious and said:

"Some one is making a fool of you. Come, now, tell me who put such an idea into your head."

"No one, sir."

"Why did you wait all this time to declare your claim?"



"I was awaiting my opportunity."

"Your opportunity?"

"Yes, sir."

"And it has come?"

"I think so."

Blandry suddenly leaped forward. He almost succeeded in seizing Jack, but the latter dodged away quickly, and started to run. Blandry ran after him, and Jack called out:

"Back, sir, back! Haul off or I will shoot you dead. I am determined."

"Halt one moment. I will not approach you."

Jack did halt.

"My lad, you are acting under a great delusion, but you may succeed in creating a scandal. Come, I will have a talk with you. Let's enter my office and possibly we may come to some sort of an arrangement."

Jack was half-inclined to accept the man's offer, but fortunately a second thought urged him to refuse. Once in this man's power he did not know what might occur. The man might succeed in overpowering him, regain possession of the paper, then he could make a charge and send Jack out of the way.

"I will not treat with you, sir."

"What do you propose to do?"

"I have not decided yet."

"You have committed a state's prison offense. You can prove nothing; I can prove your offense. It is better for you to conciliate me for your mother's sake. I urge you to consider well, or you will bring her in sorrow to her grave. Consider what a friend I have been to her."

"I do not consider that you have been her friend. I feel that you have robbed her. I defy you to do your worst. You are a villain. You have your day now; my turn will come. I warn you, do not follow me."



"Boy, one word: if we do not settle this matter now I warn you that I will pursue you to the ends of the earth if necessary. I will bring you to justice."

"You will bring me to justice?"

"I will, I swear."

"And I swear to bring you to justice. I know all about your criminality, and hang me if I don't in the end prove your guilt."

At the word "hang" Blandry uttered a cry, and under the moonlight our hero could see a sudden convulsion pass over the man's face; and his words, hissed as they were, strangely indicated that the man had misunderstood our hero's use of the word "hang," and he gasped:

"You will hang me, eh?"

A strange impulse caused Jack to answer:

"*Yes, hung you.*"

The man's face assumed a ghastly hue, and in an unguarded moment he let go an exclamation that caused Jack's heart to give one great bound. He was a wonderful lad in "getting on" to ideas, as the expression is used, and a strange, weird suspicion flashed through his mind. The actions of the man were very strange and added to the strength of his suspicion. Jack concluded that nothing could be gained by a continued talk with Blandry, and he bounded away. Blandry called after him, but Jack paid no heed.

Blandry stood for a few moments like one dazed, and finally he muttered:

"That boy means me harm; he intends to rob me. He will make much trouble for me, but there remains one chance for me. I'll put him where the dogs won't bite. It will be strange if I permit a lad of sixteen to outwit me and rob me. No, no, I'll attend to his case. I have money; he is poor. Yes, yes, I must act very cunningly, but I'll dispose of him. He shall not rob me of my fortune."



Blandry entered the factory and proceeded to the spot where his watchman lay bound.

"Hello, Masters! what are you doing here?"

The man was gagged and could not answer. Blandry released him. There was an agonized look upon the watchman's face, but it was some moments before he could ejaculate:

"Mr. Blandry, you have been robbed."

"Yes, I met the burglars and had a tussle with them, but they got away."

"Oh, sir, it was only one robber."

"No, there were two of them. There may have been more, but I only saw two."

"Did you see two of them, sir?"

"Yes."

"I only saw one, sir, and I recognized him."

"You did?"

"I did. Oh, sir, it's awful!"

"What is awful?"

"To think who the burglar is—the one I recognized."

"Whom did you recognize?"

"Shall I tell you, sir?"

"Yes, tell me."

"I hardly dare to; it is awful."

"Tell me who it was you recognized."

"Your *protégé*, sir—yes, your *protégé*, Jack Warren."

Blandry meditated a moment, or pretended to do so, and then asked:

"What makes you think it was Warren?"

"I recognized him."

"You are certain?"

"I am."

"That shows how a man can be mistaken. I thought it was Warren, but when I collared him and had a struggle I discovered that it was not Warren, and I would



have captured the fellow if his companion had not come to his assistance."

"It was not Warren?" exclaimed Masters.

"No."

"Well, I'll be shot! How easy it is to be deceived! It's lucky you saw him or I would have sworn it was Warren."

"We will go to the safe and learn what they secured."

An examination followed and Blandry said:

"They must have been scared off. They got the safe open, but there is not a dollar missing—not a paper. We are lucky."

"Yes, sir, we are."

"Say, Masters, I'd prefer that you say nothing about this attempt. I don't want it known that the burglars got the better of my watchman. It may encourage other scamps to attempt the same game."

Blandry put it very adroitly, on good reasonable grounds, and Masters was not averse to keeping the affair a secret. He was mortified at being overcome in the struggle. Blandry meantime had reasons of his own for keeping the affair quiet, as will be developed as our narrative advances.

Jack reached his home, and strangely enough found his mother up and around. She was filled with terror. Something had caused her to rise and go to her son's room, when she discovered his absence, and at once her heart was filled with terror. When Jack returned she met him. Jack was taken all aback, and his mother in tones of anguish exclaimed upon beholding him and recognizing that he was under a disguise:

"Oh, Jack, where have you been and what have you been doing?"

"Mother, I did not intend that you should know, but I must tell you the truth."



Jack did tell what he had done, and his mother wept tears of anguish.

"Oh, my dear son, I cannot blame you," she said, "but we are ruined. Yes, it is as I feared it would be—that man is our enemy. He will send you to jail; he will prove relentless; he will show us no mercy."

"But, mother, he has robbed us. I have the proof."

"But we cannot prove it to the world, my son. The advantage is with him."

"Yes, in good time we will prove it to the world, mother."

"No, no, my son; if that man has robbed us he has laid his plans too well. We will never be able to prove his guilt, and he is now our bitter enemy and a bitter man."

"Mother," said Jack, "I wish you were a woman of nerve."

"I have nerve enough, my son, but to see you sent to prison will kill me."

"Mother, you need not fear; I will never be sent to prison."

"Yes, my son, that man will pursue you."

"No, mother, I will pursue him. Suppose I tell you something—something terrible. Have you the nerve to meet my statement with calmness?"

"Yes, my son; now that the worst has come I can meet the consequences with calmness."

"I can tell you something that will lead you to justify my course. Yes, I can tell it if sure that you can meet it with calmness."

"Tell me everything, my son."

"Mother, suppose I tell you that my father was not drowned, but murdered?"

Mrs. Warren uttered a low cry and there came to her face a look such as often comes to one just before final dissolution.



"My son," she managed to ask in a husky voice, "what do you mean?"

"I have something still more startling to tell you."

"Something still more startling, my son?"

"Yes, something still more startling."

"Oh, my poor boy," moaned the mother, "you have gone mad. I feared it. This sorrow and suspicion have preyed upon your mind until you have indeed gone mad."

"Mother, I assure you I have not gone mad. I am on this man's track and he shall do us justice."

"Oh, my son, I warned you and you promised me."

"Yes, mother, I made a promise. I said at the time I would do nothing for the present. I intended to wait. I did wait—yes, I waited until the proper time, and the proper time has arrived. That man robbed us; he robbed your husband, my father. And do you suppose I will let him get away with the fruits of his robbery? Never, never, mother; I have the forged bill of sale."

"Yes, and you committed what will appear as a burglary to secure it. That man has recognized you. He will accuse you of burglary. We are poor and defenseless. He will now triumph over us."

"No, mother, he will not triumph over us."

"What can you do, my son? He will surely have you convicted as a burglar."

"No, he will not, mother. I have that man's secret; he is a conspiring scoundrel, but I will bring him face to face with the consequences of his crime. Mother, I told you that I had a still more startling revelation to make."

"My son, you can say nothing to me more terrible than the statement you have already made."

"I can state something more startling, mother."

"You can?"

"I can."

"Do so."



"Can you bear it?"

"I can bear anything now—yes, anything."

"Mother, suppose I should say to you that papa was not dead?"

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## CHAPTER VI.

JACK PROJECTS A STARTLING SUPPOSITION—THE GAME BETWEEN THE ROBBER AND A BRAVE BOY COMMENCES—JACK HAS MANY HAIR-BREADTH ESCAPES, BUT PRESSES ON TOWARD A SURE VICTORY.

THE look that came to the face of Mrs. Warren will never be described by mortal pen, and there she stood speechless, gazing at her son. Jack ran to his mother, crying:

"Mother, have I killed you?"

Tears came to Mrs. Warren's relief, or it is possible the startling suggestion might have killed her. At length she found strength to ask:

"Oh, my son, why torture me? Why thrust upon me such a weird and startling suggestion?"

"Mother, I have grounds for my suspicion; indeed, I am fully satisfied that papa still lives."

"Your father still lives?"

"Yes."

"My son, was he not buried from this house?"

"Yes, but how did we identify him? By his clothes only and the articles found in his pocket; and do you recall, mother, how Blandry urged you not to gaze on his dead face at all? Do you recall how he stood with you and after one glance drew you away?"

"And, my son, is this the only basis of your suspicion?"

"No, mother, I have almost positive proof; I cannot name it now."



“But, my son, how could we be so deceived?”

“In the easiest manner possible.”

Jack proceeded and told his mother how a cunning plan might be carried out. His theory was a reasonable one, certainly, if founded on any other grounds that might suggest a possibility of its truth. Jack did have other reasons, indeed a most excellent basis for his suspicion, but he did not at that time disclose it to his mother. He merely told her that he had good reasons for believing that his father still lived, and he said:

“You now see, mother, that I must indeed become this man’s pursuer. It is not a fortune alone that we seek, but the establishment of the fact that my father still lives.”

Mrs. Warren was thoughtful for a long time, but at length she said:

“Jack, I cannot blame you for anything you have done, but that paper is of no use to us.”

“No, but it will be of use to my father when I find him alive.”

“But this man will put you in jail. Were you to accuse him now you could furnish no proof.”

“Mother, I have a secret. When I went to work for Blandry I asked you to let me keep my earnings—that I had a use for them. It might have appeared very selfish, but I had a purpose. Mother, I’ve saved almost every cent that I received from that man; I have it hidden away. I saved it against just such a contingency as the present. I saw you go without comforts; I saw you strive to make both ends meet, while I each week withheld my wages. Such conduct may have appeared cruel, but, mother, I had a purpose. As I said, I knew the day would come when that man would withdraw the allowance he was making to you, and it was against that day I saved the money. I can give that money to you



and it will maintain you until I can do better, and in the end solve the mystery of my father's supposed death. I will do it; in the mean time I must go away."

"Go away, my son?" cried the mother.

"Yes, mother, go away."

"Where will you go?"

"You need not fear for me, but I must not remain here for that man to accuse me and put me in prison and thus stop my researches. No, mother, I will get beyond his power."

"He will accuse you all the same and you will become a fugitive."

"He may not accuse me, mother."

"He will certainly accuse you."

"I do not believe he will."

"Why do you believe he will not?"

"Because he is a guilty man and he will not dare precipitate the question as to his honesty. If he were to arrest me I would have to make a defense. He can well discern what my defense may be."

"Then why need you go away?"

"To escape his vengeance—his secret vengeance. That man will seek to get me out of the way, but if I hide from him I will prevail over his terrors like an avenging Nemesis, and I will be able to work in secret and run him down. I will be able to learn his secret, uncover his sin, and bring my father forth as his accuser."

"And when will you go away?"

"At once, mother—yes, this very night—and my very absence will fill that man with terror and may cause him to continue your allowance. He may not dare withdraw it; and, mother, you can take it. He is but giving us our own. I know that man robbed my father; I know that man either murdered my father or at this moment holds him somewhere a prisoner. I will solve the mys-



tery; his secret shall be unmasked, and we will come into our own. Mother, you can trust me. I will prove myself equal to the task I have set myself, and villainy shall be confronted with the consequences of crime. Mark well my words; I will make them good."

Mrs. Warren was very unhappy, but the words of her son had aroused strange, wild hopes in her heart, especially after Jack had outlined how the fraud could have been perpetrated, the motive that would suggest it, and the various little facts that pointed toward its probability. Indeed, as he reviewed certain facts, she did begin to realize the possibility that the suspicion might be verified.

Jack entered the house, secured his savings, and gave them to his mother, claiming that he had reserved all he needed for himself. He urged upon her hopefulness and courage, advised her in various ways, especially what to say and how to act in case Blandry called upon her, and he closed with the words:

"Mother, you need have no fear concerning me, and you can trust that in good time I will run down this man's secret. I am certain that my father lives and is in this man's power, but I must move very cautiously lest Blandry take advantage of his power. I only need a few weeks before I will have him in a position where he will not dare do anything further; indeed, I may force him to a full confession or compromise, but one thing is certain: I must not rest. Every day is a gain to him, and removes us so much further from our proofs and fastens his hold upon the stolen right. That man shall do justice."

The final parting between Jack and his mother was very affecting, but at length the lad departed. He had decided upon his course, and his plan was to merely lay low for a few days and watch developments following his late bold act in invading Blandry's safe.



Upon the following day the widow sat in her house trembling with fear and apprehension, expecting that every moment officers would come to her home in search of her son. She watched eagerly to see if the men went to their work. She listened for the factory bell to ring, and it did ring, and she saw the men go to their labor. She passed the day, and no officers came to look for her son, and at night she saw the men returning from their work. Not a soul had spoken of the attempted burglary, and on the following day she went through the same ordeal and still not one word did she hear from any direction concerning any attempted robbery at the factory; and so several days passed and she got no intimation of publicity concerning the attempted robbery. One evening she was sitting on her porch meditating and thinking of her absent son, when a shadow fell before her. She looked up and there stood Mr. Blandry.

For a moment her heart stood still. Mr. Blandry meantime approached nearer, with a pleasant smile on his face, and sitting down on the porch after his first salutation, asked:

"Mrs. Warren, where is Jack? I've just learned that he has not been to the factory for two days."

The widow did not know what answer to make. She could not discern the man's purpose, but his manner and his words appeared to confirm Jack's prediction as to his conduct, and said conduct, the lad had said, would indicate his guilt. Jack had said: "If he is not guilty he will pursue me. If he is guilty he will hide the fact of the night's adventure." The man certainly thus far had concealed the story of the attempted burglary, and yet he and Jack had faced each other and threatening words had passed between them.

"Where is Jack?" again asked Blandry.

"He has gone away, sir."



"Gone away?"

"Yes."

"Where has he gone?"

"He did not tell me. He said there were reasons why he must go away, and that I must not worry, as he would get along all right and in good time would return."

"You haven't heard from him since he went away?"

"No."

"You will hear from him?"

"I don't know."

"Oh, you will certainly; and, Mrs. Warren, when you hear from him tell him that he has nothing to fear from me; tell him to come back and go to work."

"Why should he fear you, sir?"

"Oh, you just give him my message. He will understand."

There was a searching look in Blandry's eyes as he spoke, and Mrs. Warren was at a loss what answer to make. A moment passed and then Blandry said in a cautious tone:

"Didn't it ever strike you, Mrs. Warren, that Jack is a little queer? I do not wish to alarm you, but doesn't he get strange ideas in his head at times?"

"No, sir; I think he is one of the clearest-headed lads I ever met, although he is my son."

"Oh, I see. A mother is a mother, and of course I can excuse you."

"I am not seeking excuses for my admiration of my son."

"Oh, no, certainly not. But, Mrs. Warren, I came here on a little business. Has Jack told you anything? Did he say anything about his mad freak? Did he ever tell you who put certain crazy ideas into his head?"

"I do not think he has any crazy ideas."

"Hum! I see. Well, Mrs. Warren, that lad may get



himself into serious trouble. I will tell you now that he is already in serious trouble. I will go further; I will say that I could send Jack to jail."

"I do not think so, sir," said Mrs. Warren bravely, although her voice trembled as she spoke.

"Yes, I see he has told you. I hope, madam, you were not the instigator of his mad freak."

"To what freak do you allude, sir?"

"Jack has been guilty of the crime of attempted burglary and has been fully identified. He committed a murderous assault on my watchman, Mr. Masters, and Mr. Masters fully identified him as his assailant. Mrs. Warren, I can send your son to prison for the rest of his life, but my respect for you and his late father has caused me to suppress a knowledge of his crime for the present—yes, for the present. But unless I am indemnified against a future attack I shall be compelled in self-defense to send him to jail. A word from me and the officers would be on his track. They can run him down in no time, but it is in your power to save him. I desire to act in a merciful manner, but I must be protected. I must have some guarantee that my life is safe, otherwise no one can tell to what lengths he may go. The boy is crazy—yes, Mrs. Warren, stark crazy—and crazy people are dangerous. I must have a guarantee of safety or I will be compelled to appeal to the law. If so compelled Jack will be tried and convicted and sent to jail for twenty years at least."

Mrs. Warren shuddered, for she could perceive that to a certain degree Mr. Blandry spoke the truth. He did hold her son in his power despite all the suspicions that her son held concerning him. She remained silent, and the manufacturer after a moment said:

"Yes, I must have some guarantee."

"You mean you want Jack to promise never to do so again?"



"I want more than that, Mrs. Warren."

The widow remained silent.

"I have been thinking about you, Mrs. Warren, and I have thought that possibly you might have some claim on me. Your husband did aid me with suggestions in making my invention. He assigned all his right and interest to me, and you have no legal claim upon me, but I am willing to waive that—yes, waive it—and consider that you have a claim."

Mrs. Warren was a shrewd woman. She saw that, alas! her son's suspicions were well grounded and were being verified. She also discerned that the man was edging to an offer of compromise of some kind. She would have been free to consider a compromise but for one fact—the startling suggestion she had received from her son that her husband still lived. If Jasper Warren lived, or if the man before her was his murderer, she could not enter into any compromise with him, and she remained silent.

"Of course, Mrs. Warren," went on Blandry, "I repeat you have no legal claim upon me nor even moral claim, but I do feel that considering the success I have had with *my* patent I can afford to allow you something; but of course it must be a gift, no legal recognition of right, and consequently the latter fact must be well and absolutely established before I can make you a gift."

Mrs. Warren did not know what to say at first, but she was a clear-headed woman, and having recovered from the first nervousness she began to think and conclude rapidly, and she said:

"Probably I will be able to get along on the allowance I am already receiving."

"No, Mrs. Warren, there must be something conclusive or I will have to discontinue my allowance; and besides, I will be compelled to prosecute your son, for he is disposed to make trouble for me. This must be made absolutely impossible."



"How can it be?"

"I have a bill of sale from your husband, which was made hurriedly. Now, what I want you to do is to write on the paper an acknowledgment of your husband's signature, testifying to your personal knowledge of the sale, and assign all your rights—of course you have no rights; it is merely a legal formula. Yes, you must do this and I will make you a very handsome allowance and forgive your son, whom I can certainly send to prison for a long term."

Mrs. Warren remained lost in thought for a long time. Had she consulted her own wishes, for peace' sake and the safety of her son she would have signed a paper; but she had promised Jack that she would not sign a paper.

Blandry waited a few moments and then said:

"What do you propose to do?"

"I cannot sign any paper."

"You cannot sign any paper?" repeated Blandry, his face deathly pale.

"I cannot."

"Why not?"

"I cannot testify falsely."

"You cannot testify falsely?"

"I cannot."

"What do you mean?"

"You ask me to verify my husband's signature."

"Yes."

"I did not see him sign any paper."

"You know his signature."

"But I did not see him sign a paper; his signature might be imitated."

Mrs. Warren did not intend the last remark as a suggestion, but woman-like she had incautiously said what would have been better unsaid. The effect of her words was striking. Blandry's face became purple and he fairly hissed:



"Are you in the conspiracy? Dare you accuse me of forgery?"

The woman realized the true import of her words. She had become very cool, and she said:

"I insinuate nothing; I merely state as a fact that I did not see my husband sign any paper, and I cannot surrender a right which, according to your own statement, I do not possess."

"It is a mere legal formality."

"If a lawyer tells me so I may sign a paper to that effect."

"I will bring my counsel here; indeed, the lawyer who saw your husband sign the paper."

"That would not be satisfactory to me. I must select a lawyer myself."

Blandry trembled—whether from fear or anger it would have been hard to determine—but he trembled as he said:

"I see it all—I see it all. You are a party to the conspiracy; you instigated your son to rob my safe. That is the reason he would not tell me who was behind him. I will put you both in jail, he as the robber, you as accessory."

Mrs. Warren's pluck came to her aid; anger stirred up her courage, and she said:

"Very well, go on and do your worst, and you will learn what will come of it."

"You dare defy me?"

"When you insult me, yes."

"Insult you?"

"Yes."

"How?"

"You have threatened to send me to jail. I defy you."

"See here, Mrs. Warren, it is not right for you and I to quarrel—we have been too good friends. I am your friend now; I was the friend of your husband. I did wrong to



threaten, but I felt sore over your words. Come, we will adjust this matter. I will pay you well—pay you a good sum right down, and you will sign the paper. Yes, I know you will. We cannot afford to quarrel; we have been and we are too good friends for that.”

There had come a complete change over Blandry, and in this change Mrs. Warren read a confirmation of all Jack's suspicions. She began to realize and discern that indeed this man was a robber, and upon her mind there settled the conviction that her husband either been murdered or still lived. Under any circumstances she could not come to any compromise with the man. She said:

“Mr. Blandry, I do not wish to quarrel with you. It is no cause for a quarrel that I refuse to sign any paper. I cannot sign a paper. My son is the party to sign a paper, not me.”

“Your son?”

“Yes.”

“He is but a boy—a minor. His signature is valueless.”

“And so is mine.”

“But, madam, understand me; it is merely as a testimony that I want your signature. I have nothing to fear. There is no legal claim on me, but I have enemies who are jealous of me, who would cause considerable gossip. It is against that I wish to guard, nothing more; and to guard against that I am willing to make you and your son a handsome allowance. We can continue to be friends. Your son can go to college. You can own your home; you can be happy and we can be friends, but in order to do so you must sign the paper, and I know you will sign it. You cannot reject such a splendid opportunity for your son. He is a smart boy; he should go to college. And you are entitled to a good income and you shall have it as soon as you sign the paper.”

“I will sign no papers.” said Mrs. Warren firmly.



## CHAPTER VII.

JACK BECOMES A WANDERER—FIGHTS HIS WAY UPWARD—BECOMES A SORT OF DETECTIVE AND WITH GREAT SKILL TRAILS DOWN TO STARTLING FACTS.

BLANDRY became greatly excited, and he exclaimed:

“You must sign.”

“I will not.”

“Then you compel me to threaten.”

“I do not heed threats.”

“I will withdraw your present allowance.”

“I cannot help it.”

“I will pursue you and your son. I will make you and him miserable.”

“You will?”

“I will.”

“Mr. Blandry, I have not entered into any conspiracy and I did not advise my son to take any steps against you. But you have threatened me; you have declared a war upon me. So let it be. War it shall be, and now I will speak plainly. I should not have done so had you not threatened me. You by your threats have convinced me that you are a villain, that you are a forger, a murderer, a cheat, a robber. You threaten—go on. I now throw a threat and a challenge to you. I not only defy you, but I will bend all my energies to prove you a forger, a murderer, and a robber.”

Blandry rose from his seat and stood quivering with either rage or fear, and in a sardonic manner he laughed and said:

“Madam, like your son you are a lunatic.”

“You will find I am not a lunatic when this warfare is over. Wretch, I fear you not. You threaten to with-



draw my allowance; I will not accept another penny at your hands. Go away from here; never approach this house again. Yes, I defy you, and I will expose you and compel you to disgorge. You are giving me nothing; you never did give me anything. You have been robbing me, and I swear I will prove it; already I have proof. Go hence, carry out your threats, but beware, for I am on your track and in good time you shall stand confronted with the consequences of your crimes."

Blandry actually wilted under the widow's vehement words, and when he found voice he said:

"Hold, Mrs. Warren! This must not be. You and I must not quarrel. We cannot afford to quarrel. I did not mean what I said; I know you do not mean what you said. Come, come, we will talk this whole matter over in a quiet and amicable manner."

"No, sir, I have not one word more to say. I defy you; I will fight this through to the end. You began the war; I will end it."

Mrs. Warren rose to go into her house. Blandry started to follow her, but she slammed the door in his face. He went to a window opening on the porch. Mrs. Warren trembled. The man's face was illuminated with an expression of bitter malignity. He was the possible murderer of her husband; she was alone in the house; he might seek to murder her. She was a determined woman. In a drawer there was a weapon, a revolver which had lain there for years. She seized it, ran to the window as the man was entering, aimed the weapon at his heart and said:

"Go away, or as I live I will shoot you in your tracks. You murdered my husband; you shall not murder me."

The man leaped forward, when he received a blow that knocked him stunned to the floor of the porch. Jack like an apparition had appeared. He had been near and



had overheard every word that had passed between the man Blandry and his mother. A moment Blandry lay still, then he recovered, rose to his feet, and with a curse stole away in the darkness; and the mother, throwing her arms around the neck of her son, kissed him and demanded:

“Jack, where did you come from?”

“I came home to report and reconnoiter,” was the answer.

Jack during his absence from home had saved the train of cars, proved himself a hero, and after a little time he had determined to return to his home for a talk with his mother.

Our readers will recall the conversation Jack had with the engineer of the train he had saved. He had said he had no home. Practically his statement was the truth, for he had determined to become a wanderer; but later events altered his plans. Our readers will recall also that on the night when he saved the train he wandered away, fearing pursuit, and finally lay down in a copse of wood to rest.

On the morning following he started forth, hardly knowing which way to turn, and after knocking around for two days he approached a large town late in the evening. He entered the town, and having nothing else to do went down to the depot. He was sitting on a bench at the station when a man passed. The latter stopped and eyed Jack. The lad looked up and recognized the engineer of the train which he had saved.

“Hello!” said Jack, “I am glad to see you,” and he arose and approached the engineer. “Do you recognize me?”

“I thought I did, but now I recognize your voice. I know you and I am glad to meet you. Come; I am off duty. Come with me to my house. I want to have a talk with you.”



Jack was footsore and hungry, and he gladly accompanied his new friend, who led him to his home. Jack was introduced to Mrs. Sanford, and her husband informed her who Jack was, for he had told the tale of his escape, and our hero was informed that he was to remain with the Sanfords over night. At the supper-table there appeared a very lovely girl of fourteen, who was introduced to Jack, and Alec Sanford said:

"This is the lad who acted the part of the hero and saved the lives of over a hundred people."

Jack's heart thumped as he saw the bright, approving gleam in the fair girl's eyes as her father alluded to his deed of genuine heroism.

Jack passed the night with the Sanfords, but before retiring he held a long talk with the stalwart engineer and the latter managed to lead Jack forward to the telling of his whole story. Alec Sanford was a level-headed sort of a man and he told Jack that he was starting out on a sort of Don Quixote errand; that it would prove impossible to establish his father's rights in the patent and that he would lose very valuable time just at the time of life when he should be improving his opportunities for his future success. "Why, Jack," he said, "you are already an engineer. You have served a good apprenticeship in a machine shop. Come with me as fireman, and some day you will be the greatest engineer on the road. You've got it in you. Yes, lad, you are cut out for an engineer and you'll make a hummer."

Jack's eyes danced, and on the following evening he determined to go back to his home and have a talk with his mother, and thus it was that he was present at the time the man Blandry attempted to force his way into the house. Jack was under a disguise. He reached his home, stole in, and was secreted in the hall near the porch during the time his mother was holding the talk



with Blandry. Jack overheard nearly every word that was spoken, and was glad later that he was at hand to lay out Blandry, who in his rage really might have murdered his mother.

"Jack, I am so glad you are here. Now I can warn you that man intends to put detectives on your track."

"You need not fear, mother; he does not intend to put detectives on my track. He is more afraid that detectives will be on his track."

Our hero proceeded and told his mother all that had happened to him during the days he had been away. His mother listened with a great deal of interest, and when Jack told how he had been offered a position as fireman she said:

"Jack, that would be grand only for one fact; that man really intends to pursue you."

"No, mother, I intend to pursue him. I will go on the engine and become an engineer, but in the mean time I will follow that man. I am now more convinced than ever that my father is alive and is that man's living victim—a second prisoner of Chillon. It will take time to run him down, and we must live in the mean time, but I swear to you that I will run Blandry down, and not only solve the mystery of my father's death or find him if living, but I will make that man disgorge. And now, mother, as to my plan: we must leave here."

"Do you mean I must leave here?"

"Yes, mother, you must go with me and be under my protection. We do not know what that man may attempt."

"But what shall we do with our property here?"

"You have a lease of the house. Get old Mrs. Ransom to come here and live. We will steal away at night. No one will know where you are and you will be safe. As far as I am concerned, I can take care of myself, but that



man would keep you in constant terror. He would make your life a continual torture. He must not have the power, and our absence will prove a constant menace and torture to him, and in that way I will be favored in solving the mystery of my father's disappearance."

Jack gave his mother full instructions as to what she should do and then disappeared, having arranged where to meet her on a certain night when all was arranged for her departure.

Two days passed, and one night Mrs. Warren at about midnight stole forth from her home. Jack was at hand to meet her. He had a vehicle into which he put his mother and they drove away. Jack drove some seventeen miles, and on the following morning led his mother to a railway station. They entered a train, and the following night Mrs. Warren retired to rest in a home over a hundred miles distant from the town where she had dwelt with her husband for nineteen years previous to the fatal night when he so strangely disappeared.

Having seen his mother comfortably fixed, Jack went to the town where the Sanfords lived and reported himself to the engineer as ready to accept the position of fireman.

When Blandry learned that Mrs. Warren had disappeared his rage knew no bounds. The man had arranged a plan whereby he hoped to make himself secure against any plans that the widow and her son might have formed against him, and her disappearance caused him to fear and tremble lest what he most dreaded might occur at any moment.

In the mean time Jack secured a position as fireman's apprentice, and he was delighted to serve with Alec Sanford, who took great delight in teaching the youth every point concerning the running of an engine, and Jack proved an apt scholar.



Six months the lad served, and upon two occasions during a press of business he was put in charge of a freight engine and acquitted himself so well that an advancement appeared certain. Indeed, all along the line he was known as the "little engineer," his extreme youth earning him the title; but old Sanford declared time and time again that there was not a more capable man in the employ of the company.

One night our hero had completed his run and was on his way to the lodging where he and Sanford stayed when at the further end of their route. One night they were at home and one night away. It was midnight when, as stated, Jack started alone toward his lodging, a short distance only from the depot. He had gone but a little way when he observed that he was being followed. He had observed a bad-looking fellow hanging around the depot while he and Sanford were switching their engine and had thought nothing of it, but when he observed that he was being followed he attached more significance to the fact. Jack had apparently given up all idea of pursuing Blandry, but his withdrawal from the pursuit was only apparent. In reality he was studying night and day, and he was saving his money and making money in order to accumulate a sum that would in good time permit him to take up the pursuit. He was determined to solve the mystery of his father's disappearance. He had become quite a trader along the road. He used his money as a capital for trading purposes. He was resorting to every possible method for the accumulation of money; indeed he had, as intimated, but one real present main purpose in life, and that was to run the man Blandry to earth and unmask him. As stated, on the night in question he discovered that he was being followed, and when he made sure of the fact he determined to take great risks and draw the pursuer on to a display of his purpose.



Jack did not go to his lodging, but proceeded on toward a lonely part of the town, and as he anticipated, the man followed. It was evident the man did not suspect that he had been discovered. Our hero at length arrived at a place where he thought he could bring the matter to a test. He came to a halt and sat down beside the road under a tree. The man, however, did not approach; he stood off at a distance and merely watched. The youth was mystified; he had expected an attack. He was prepared for one and he had concluded that Blandry had already started in to do away with him. From the first instant that he learned or suspected that he was being followed he connected the incident with Blandry; indeed, he had always been on the alert, anticipating at any moment some attack or attempt to do away with him.

Seeing that the man did not approach our hero determined to carry the war into Africa. He proposed to interview the man, but when he started toward the skulker the latter ran off and disappeared. Jack lost all trace of him.

The little engineer finally arrived at his lodging, and in answer to Sanford's inquiries made some trivial excuse and turned into his bed, but not to sleep. He spent more than half the time between the moment of his "turning in" and dawn meditating over the strange fact of his being followed and the singular actions of the man who had been his pursuer. He closely studied every phase of the affair as presented to his mind, but failed to discern the plan his enemy might have decided upon; but that a scheme was being worked out against him he felt assured.



## CHAPTER VIII.

JACK GOES THROUGH A SERIES OF THRILLING ADVENTURES—OUR HERO IS TRAILED AND TRAILS—PLUCK AND DARING CARRY HIM FORWARD AND HE APPROACHES THE SOLUTION OF THE MYSTERY.

ON the following morning Jack took his place on the engine, but his eyes had been glancing around in every direction. He was on the lookout for the man who had trailed him and who had run away when an attempt was made to face him.

A week passed. Our hero saw nothing of the mysterious man, and one day he was assigned to run a freight engine. There had been a sort of strike on the road and every available man was put to work. Jack had run his train over a long tour, and at night, after an eighteen-hour term of service, he was relieved. He was very sleepy and went into a freight house and lay down for at least six hours' rest. How long he slept he never knew, but when he awoke, or rather, as he afterward learned, regained consciousness, he was lying in a wagon, bound hands and feet. He had gradually become aroused from a condition of insensibility and did not betray the fact of his having regained consciousness. He was a level-headed chap, and discerned instantly that he was in the power of foes and had been kidnaped; indeed, he took in the situation. He figured out that his enemies had been on the "lay" for him; that while he lay in the freight house sleeping the heavy slumber of an exhausted man they had run in on him, had deftly drugged him, and he had passed from a natural sleep into an unnatural one under the influence of some powerful drug. Singularly enough, when his senses did return all his ordinary intelligence



and full consciousness returned to him, and, as stated, he instantly took in the situation; but he was powerless. He was bound hands and feet and lay in the bottom of the wagon helpless. He saw two men seated on the front seat of the vehicle, and he knew that it was night, for the stars were visible as he gazed upward. He closed his eyes, as intimated, and gave no sign of recovered consciousness, but he listened. The men were talking and he heard one of them say:

"I don't like this job."

"Why not?"

"Well, I'll tell you: it's cold-blooded murder. Now I am always ready for a scrimmage and don't mind sending a man forward, but when it comes to cold-blooded murder I am against it; that's all."

"It won't do to weaken now."

"Oh, I don't mean to weaken. We will get the money all the same, but we can dispose of this lad without taking his life. He appears to be a fine, stocky lad."

"We have nothing to do with that. I'll tell you what we can do: we can fill him with sinkers, cast him into the river, and let him sink. It can be done quietly and quickly. There will be no struggle. He will just go below the surface, die, and we make our money, and there will be one lad less in the world; that is all."

This was the conversation Jack was compelled to listen to, and he knew well enough that the assassins could carry out their plans, for he was bound and helpless. They could very easily "fill him with sinkers," as the wretch put it, toss him into the river, and he would noiselessly sink to the bottom, struggle for a few moments, and then lie still, a strangled victim of an avaricious scoundrel who had made away with the father and who was seeking to dispose of the son.

Jack had ample time to consider matters, and he was sur-



prised that his enemy should seek to dispose of him. He had not made any demonstration against Blandry from the moment he and his mother had disappeared from the town where the factory was located. He had purposely lain quiet in order to throw his man off his guard. He thought Blandry would become assured of safety and remain inactive. Nearly a year had passed, and here in the most thrilling and startling manner he learned that his enemy was seeking to destroy him, had evidently employed a gang of desperate men to make away with him, and these men at that moment had him in their power. As stated, he lay still and listened to the conversation between the two men, and he heard one of them say finally:

"I tell you I will not have a hand in disposing of this lad."

"What will you do?"

"We will take him over to the ranch, put him in a cellar, and keep him a prisoner for a year or two, and then let him loose. We will get the money all the same and we will not have his blood on our consciences."

"But there is no blood about it if we quietly drown him."

"It's the same thing; and see here, I'll give you a pointer. If we keep the lad alive we will always have a hold on Blandry. He is becoming a millionaire, and after a year or two we can just give him a hint that the lad is alive, and bleed him. That's the sort of bleeding I like."

"But you forget."

"Forget what?"

"We've got a woman to dispose of. What will you do with her?"

"Kill her."

"No."

Jack's blood ran cold. He knew well enough that the



woman alluded to was his mother—his brave, gentle, and really beautiful mother.

We are telling these facts in a cold, matter-of-fact sort of way, dear reader, but just for one moment in imagination put yourself in this lad's place and seek to fully realize what his agony must have been at that moment—what anguish must have filled his soul. He could face death or imprisonment for himself, but when it came to the knowledge that his mother was also to become the victim of these cold-blooded fiends the anguish of the little engineer cannot be conceived.

Jack possessed an active mind. He was full of resources, and even at that moment, with all the chances so dead against him, he began to revolve in his mind the possibility of making his escape. Had he been hand free he would have had a chance, but there he was bound hands and feet—securely bound. He had been tied up by men who well knew how to knot the tough rope made of prairie grass, and he dared not move, for he did not wish these men to learn sooner than possible that he had returned to full consciousness; and while he lay there the conversation between the two rascals continued. One of them had laid out his plan. The latter appeared to be more merciful and scrupulous than his companion. His crime under any circumstances was gross enough, but it did appear that the fellow was averse to murder if it could be avoided.

As stated, Jack's blood ran cold, and the conversation between the two men continued. One of them said:

"I don't know but yours is a good scheme; but suppose some day one or both should escape?"

The man questioned laughed and answered:

"What difference would that make to us after a year or two? We'd have our money, and then again they might both die. Of course that would not be our fault; we



would not kill them. We can't help people's dying, you know."

"Then your idea is not to kill the chap?"

"That is my idea."

"Say, do you know, it's struck me he may be dead already. He hasn't moved since we dosed him, and he's had a good shaking up."

"Oh, he'll come around all right. The dose will last him twenty-four hours. I intended it should. I forced enough down his throat while we had him under the influence of the chloroform to make him quiet for at least twenty hours."

"And you think we can squeeze our man?"

"Why, certainly; those two people will be a mint for us."

"Do you know why the rich millionaire wishes to get rid of them?"

"I suspect, but I don't know for certain."

"He is paying a great price."

"Yes, and that is all the better for us; but we've had a pretty hard time of it to get this young fellow just right. I suppose there will be a great kick-up about it unless my little stratagem succeeds; they they will think he has run away."

Jack during all this time was revolving in his mind what he should do. He was helpless, as stated; he could not make a fight. All he could do was submit, but with life there was hope. The two men had determined to make a prisoner of him, not kill him. He was young, strong, and alert. There might be presented an opportunity. He did not know how long he had been supposed to have slept, but he determined to sleep overtime, and even at that moment while undergoing his terrible ordeal he smiled at the odd conceit.

A little later he made a discovery. He learned that he



must have been unconscious at least eighteen or twenty hours. He learned that one period of daylight had passed since he had been captured, and that at the time he recovered full consciousness it was early on the second night; indeed, at the time he made the discovery he learned that it was about nine o'clock in the night. A sun had risen and a sun had set during the time that he had been unconscious. This pleased him, and later he learned that within half an hour the men expected to arrive at a house where they intended to remain over night; and right there, he calculated, his opportunities might possibly be presented for an escape.

The men appeared to assume as a certainty that Jack was still unconscious or they would not have talked so freely; and there the lad lay until he became conscious that the wagon had been turned from the road and had stopped in front of a house. He heard no one moving around and saw no lights. The two men alighted and went away from the wagon. They did not appear to fear that Jack might escape, and he was permitted to remain in the wagon for fully fifteen minutes, when the men came and lifted him out. He had a part to play, and he played it well. He was seemingly as sound asleep as though still under the influence of some powerful drug, and as the men carried him into the house he overheard one of them say:

"Well, he is having a good nap."

"He is, and I intended it to be so. I was not taking any chances."

"How long will he sleep?"

"For about seven or eight hours yet."

"And by to-morrow we will arrive at Gap."

"Yes."

"And then——"

"We will settle him and go and hunt up the woman."



Jack's blood again ran cold as he contemplated the peril that portended for his mother, and he was determined in some way to escape and flee to her rescue and protection.

The men carried our hero into the house. His eyes were closed and he could not look around, but they kept talking and he learned considerable, and soon became aware that he had been carried into a dark room and laid upon the floor; then one of the men said:

"Suppose he should awake?"

"Let him awake. He is bound tight enough. We can cook our meal, eat, and go to sleep ourselves. We will find him here all right in the morning."

"How about feeding him?"

"People are not hungry while asleep. If he awakes we will feed him in the morning."

The two men left the room and Jack was alone. He opened his eyes. All was dark around him, but he was alone and that was a great thing for him. He was tightly bound. His hands were strapped to his sides, his feet were secured, and it did not appear possible that he could escape; but he was very resourceful, not one to give up, and he began to consider. He meditated for a long time, and finally, like an inspiration, there came to him the recollection that in his pocket he had some matches. His hands were strapped right against his pockets. He could not free his hands, but he could work his fingers, and he commenced picking at the cloth of his pants, and after a long time succeeded in making a hole; and lo! the matches were there—a whole box which he had placed there just a little time before retiring to the freight house to take a nap. His heart beat quickly, for he had thought out a scheme whereby he hoped to free himself. Jack secured the box of matches and then rolled himself along until he got his mouth close to the box, and it is surpris-



ing how much one can do with his mouth when he has lost the use of his hands. He managed to open the box, took two or three matches between his teeth, and managed to ignite them by scratching them on the floor; then quickly he rolled so that one of the cords that bound his hands was placed right in the fluttering blaze. It was a novel undertaking, and under all the circumstances a great feat, and luck attended him, for the thongs made of prairie grass easily took fire. Jack's wrists were being scorched, but he did not mind that when the temporary pain meant freedom and an opportunity to hasten to the rescue and protection of his mother. The rope only partially burned through, but a second attempt and the ingenious and daring lad had one hand free, and then it became an easy matter to free himself entirely. He succeeded, and felt joyful over his own ingenuity; and we repeat, it was a great scheme, and only a lad with a great head would ever have thought out such a novel plan.

Once free he rose to his feet. It had taken fully two hours to free himself, and he concluded that it was after midnight. He was compelled to rub himself well in order to secure the free use of his limbs, for he had been bound for a long time, but at length he felt fairly well and then he lit a match to take a look at his surroundings. He found himself in a room in which there was not one article of furniture. It was damp, and everything around betrayed mold.

"I am all right now," he muttered.

He had not been locked in. The men had calculated upon the continued effect of the drug and also upon the secure manner in which he had been bound. They did not for a moment dream of such a novel scheme as one's burning himself to freedom, and we will here state that had it not been for the lucky fact of the possession of the matches and their happening to be in a pocket into which



he could with patience work, he never could have freed himself. But he was free, and removing his shoes he stepped on tiptoe out to the hall. Here he lit a match and got the lay of the place, then on tiptoe he stole down the stairs. The moon was up, and in a room on the ground-floor, under the moonlight that came in through the windows, he saw the two kidnapers lying upon the floor in a sound sleep. There came to his face a look of triumph. He did not know in what part of the country they had halted with him, and he calculated that they had possibly traveled sixteen or seventeen hours. He did not disturb the men; he had no mind to take any chances, not even to secure the weapons which he concluded they had on their persons. He would have liked to have a pistol and a knife so as to be able to make a fight in case his flight was discovered in time for them to attempt a pursuit.

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## CHAPTER IX.

JACK DISPLAYS GREAT NERVE—FINDS A GUN AND STARTS  
IN ON HIS FLIGHT—WITH CONTINUED COURAGE  
THE LITTLE ENGINEER PURSUES HIS QUEST AND  
LIGHT DAWNS ON THE MYSTERY.

JACK had no time to waste. As stated, it was after midnight, and he slipped outside. There was no stable to the house, but he found the horse and wagon outside. He looked in the latter and searched around. Luck favored him. He found a revolver, and he exclaimed:

“Aha! here I am, all alive, and hang me if those fellows won’t have a lively time now if they attempt to interfere with me!”

He untethered the horse and very slowly led him away. He had no use for the wagon. The horse was what he



wanted, and the horse he secured. He led the animal a hundred paces from the house, and luck favored him. He had feared lest the animal might whinny or make some other noise, but the good steed was as quiet while being led away as Mary's famous little lamb. Jack mounted the horse for a long bareback ride. He had first discovered the trail. It was an easy thing to do, as the men had not anticipated pursuit and had taken no precautions as to covering their trail.

"Here we go!" in joyful tones exclaimed the lad as he started the good steed forward. He had no difficulty, as stated, in going back over the trail, and he rode with great care so as to not wear out the good beast who had been merely an impassive confederate of the two kidnapers.

While Jack is riding back toward the town from which he had been kidnaped after having been drugged, we will relate what befell the two kidnapers. The men slept until just before dawn, when one of them awoke. He went out to attend to their horse, and with a cry of surprise discovered that the animal had disappeared. He returned to the house and aroused his companion, saying:

"Awake! we're in hard luck. Our horse has broken loose from his tether and has disappeared. We are in a nice pickle."

"Great Scott!" cried the man as he leaped to his feet and walked outside, and sure enough their good steed had disappeared. The wagon was there all right, but no horse.

"This is a nice go."

"You bet it is."

"Hang me if I know what we will do."

"It would be all right if it were not for our prisoner, but we will have to unbind him and make him walk with us."



There came a curious look to the face of the other man as he suggested:

"Suppose he has already walked off on our horse?"

"Nonsense! he was tied as securely as though he were in a coffin."

"Well, let's take a look at him. He may be awake and anxious for a feed."

The two men entered the room where Jack had been left and—well, he had left, that was sure. The men discovered that he was not there. They perceived at a glance that he had escaped, for the thongs which had held him lay upon the floor like the deserted shell of a chrysalis.

Curses fell from their lips, and one of them said:

"This is the penalty we pay for your over-confidence."

"Shut up," came the command.

"All our smart tricks go for naught. He has gotten away."

"Shut up, I say."

"We will lose our reward. He is warned now. We will never catch him like a weasel asleep again. In plain words, the jig is up."

While the men were disputing Jack sped on his way, and on the evening following his escape he arrived at a railway town and took a train for the town where his mother had resided in comparative comfort during the time that her son had been serving as fireman and engineer on the railroad.

When Jack appeared before his mother the latter betrayed great nervousness, and Jack was compelled to wait some little time before he dared open up the business that had brought him to her presence. At length, however, he said:

"Mother, you must release me from a prohibition you laid upon me."



“What prohibition, my son?”

“You made me make a promise—a conditional promise—that I would not give my time to the solution of the disappearance of my father. I promised that I would not do so immediately; but, mother, the time has arrived when I must run that man down.”

“My son, I was comparatively happy in our apparent security, but now you cause all the old apprehensions to agitate me.”

“Mother, you must be brave and strong. We gain nothing by inaction; we are not secure. Our enemy is active and alert; he has determined to destroy us. The remembrance of his guilt as his accumulations increase hangs over him like an avenging apparition. He evidently feels that he is constantly menaced by our very existence, and he has determined to pursue us and get us out of the way.”

“My son, what leads you to this conclusion?”

“Mother, can you be brave and strong?”

“I can.”

“Then I will tell you that man has hired desperate men to pursue and actually murder us.”

“What makes you think so, my son?”

“I was kidnaped, but I escaped from my captors. Their orders were to kill me, and they had orders to put you out of the way after they had disposed of me.”

“How do you know this, my son?”

Jack told his story and the mother listened with looks of terror and consternation upon her fair face; and when Jack had concluded he pointed out to his mother the grounds on which he founded a suspicion that his father still lived.

“And what do you propose to do, my son?”

“I propose to get on this man’s track, follow him day and night, follow until I get a clue that will lead me to



the place where he has my poor father a captive; for I am sure that father is a prisoner in his hands, unless he has since his original capture murdered him. Mother, I believe father lives, and if I can find him we will hold this man in our power; otherwise we will become fugitives fleeing for our lives from the wretch who has robbed us."

"My son, you invite great peril."

"But, mother, do you consider father?"

"I do, but unlike you I do not believe he lives. One victim is sufficient for that terrible man. I do not wish to sacrifice my son."

"I am forewarned; I know my danger. They will never catch me asleep again. I will be on my guard every minute of each twenty-four hours until I have run that man down."

"My son, what can you do—a mere lad and almost penniless?"

"It matters not, mother. I am determined to solve the mystery concerning my father. I can and will do so. I desire to act with your approval, but nothing—not even your disapproval—shall prevent me from going forward. It is better to let me have your coöperation, for I am fully and determinedly resolved. First you must leave here; they evidently have tracked you. I will take you to a place of safety and then I will be free to track this man, and I promise to succeed."

Jack finally persuaded his mother to consent to his project, and that very day he removed her to a place where he believed she could abide in absolute safety. Before parting with his mother Jack promised to see her frequently and report progress.

The mother was very unhappy; despite her son's assurances she feared, because of his youth and inexperience. She did not fully comprehend the real strength of character, cunning, and shrewdness of her son. She under-



stood his bravery, but, alas! she perceived that very cunning men would be opposed to him.

Having again and again reassured his mother, Jack departed. He returned to the home of his friend Sanford and imparted to the sturdy engineer his determination. The latter, who recognized the young engineer's ability, heartily approved of Jack's plans and assured the lad that he would aid him in money and otherwise. Jack had saved some money and was in no immediate need for cash. He set to work and deliberately invented several disguises. He had determined under his disguise to face the robber and haunt him day and night as he had threatened.

Jack passed a week in preparations and at length concluded he was all ready for his singular quest. He proceeded to his native town, arriving there at mid-day. He was gotten up as an old tramp, and his disguise was perfect. Tramps were frequent visitors in the neighborhood and their presence attracted little observation or comment. Our hero wandered around, meeting many with whom he was well acquainted, but none of them recognized him; and so he hung around for a whole day until late in the afternoon, when he purposely selected a place which would bring him under the observation of Blandry, and almost to the minute the man appeared. Jack had squatted on a rock beside the road, and as Blandry passed he cast a sharp look at the seeming ne'er-do-well. Jack looked the man back in the face, and as Blandry continued his stare our hero said:

"You needn't stare me down, mister. I am not asking alms."

"Who said you were?"

"Your looks did."

"My looks did, eh?"

"Yes."

"You are an impertinent beggar."



"You declare a falsehood. I am not a beggar, but I'd rather be a beggar than stand in your shoes."

Blandry gave a start. These were strange words to come from a miserable tramp squatted beside the road. He approached close to the old man and eyed him in the most critical way.

"Say, mister, I am not on exhibition as a curiosity."

"I repeat, you are an impertinent beggar."

"If I am a beggar I am not asking anything from you. *I know you.*"

These words are often used as a term of taunt when they have no foundation in fact, and they are always aggravating because of their very impertinent ambiguity.

"You know me?"

"Yes, I do."

"That is not strange. 'Most every one around here knows me."

"No, they don't."

"They don't, eh?"

"No, sir."

"What do you mean?"

"They know you as you appear. I know you as you are."

Blandry at once perceived that the tramp had some hidden meaning in his words.

"See here, my friend, there is a law in this town against tramps, and upon complaint the law will be enforced."

"Is there a law against tramps?"

"There is."

"That is all right, but I am not a tramp. I've asked nothing of any one."

"I can make you give an account of yourself."

"Can you?"

"I can."

"It will be a cold day when some one makes you give an



account of yourself. See here; I do not fear you. Go and make a complaint against me if you dare."

"If I dare?"

"Yes."

"I think I dare."

"Go ahead and do it, and you will regret it the rest of your life. I tell you I know you. I have asked nothing of you. I was resting here beside the road and you accosted me. Better go off about your own business. Do nothing against me. I may appear a poor worm to you, but I can turn, and if I do you will do the squirming. I tell you I know you. I've seen you before, and if I had not been a poor tramp I might have done differently on a certain night. But heed my words; go about your business or you will be sorry, that's all."

"I do not propose to let a tramp insult me. I'll know what you mean when you proclaim that you know me."

"All right; press the affair if you choose. Mark my words, if anything is said you forced the declaration—the disclosure. Come, now, I dare you to do your worst. I saw you once. I did not know who you were then. I have recognized you now, though. I wish I had sooner."

Blandry turned pale. He perceived that the man had some deep meaning in his words. A guilty man is always suspicious, always apprehensive and fearful of exposure.

"You saw me?"

"Yes."

"When?"

"It is not necessary to tell you now. I am looking for some one; that is why I came to this town. I think I will have something to tell the people I seek if I ever find them. I've been told that they have gone away. All right; I will find them some day and then, Mr. Blandry, you can look out. There will be a storm rise around your head—a worse storm than occurred on that night in March when I saw you last on the other side of the bridge."



Blandry's face became ghastly in its expression, and his voice was husky as he said:

"Be careful, you miserable blackmailer, or you will come to harm."

"Oh, I do not fear you, if I am a feeble old man. *You can't murder me*; but some day you will be unmasked—yes, sir, unmasked. You will be called upon to answer for something more terrible than forgery and robbery. I've learned something about you. I told you that I knew you. I do—I know you well."

"You miserable tramp, you get out of this town or I will lodge a complaint against you. Do you think you can blackmail me?"

"I haven't asked you for anything, have I? I don't intend to; I wouldn't take anything from your blood-stained hands. But you and I will meet again. I will not come alone; I will only come as a witness for those who will have a right to make the accusation. You have driven them away, but I will find them. I am a tramp, and I will tramp until I find those whom you have wronged. I will tell them not to accuse you of robbery. No, no; there is a heavier charge than that, and I will furnish them the proofs."

Blandry's face was livid, and he made no reply as the supposed tramp moved away, saying:

"We will meet again, Blandry—yes, we will meet again. When I see you again I will not be alone, and you will not talk of accusing me of being a tramp. You will be too busy trying to refute charges against yourself. I could put it all in plain language, but you know well enough what I mean. You are not happy, for you know you are a guilty man. Yes, you will produce your victim or your life will answer for his. Is that plain enough? Ponder on my words until we meet again. You know just what I mean."



Jack moved away with a shuffling gait, and Blandry stood and looked after him. Night had fallen, and in the gathering gloom as our hero turned he could see Blandry standing in the same place like a statue in the darkness. The young engineer had set out to work a very singular plan. Only a weird, strange lad would have conceived a trick as singular as the one he contemplated. He had gone about a quarter of a mile when he turned and covertly peeped back. It was as he had expected—Blandry was following him. Upon recognizing the latter fact Jack changed his plans entirely. He muttered:

“It is just possible that I may trick this man. If I do, great Scott! how I will have him!”

The lad went on for a mile, then left the highway as night settled more darkly around him, and he proceeded to a little deserted shanty. Once in the shanty he went to work to arrange for the carrying out of his plan. He peeped out at intervals, and after a time saw Blandry skulking in a clump of bushes, and the lad muttered:

“That man is a murderer; he intends to kill me. Well, well, how nicely he has fallen into my trap! Go on, man, murder me; but mark my words, I will make a lively corpse!”

Jack had well discerned the intention of Blandry, and his movements and words had been calculated to provoke the man to the very attempt. Blandry had become desperate; he saw exposure at every turn; his crime had driven him partially insane. At no time had he feared exposure more than he did at that moment. The words of the supposed tramp had aroused the wildest terror in his heart. Jack’s subtle allusion had been terrible to him. He really believed the tramp knew whereof he spoke; he did not for one moment suspect his real identity. He believed the supposed tramp did have some revelations to make. He had learned of the capture and sub-



sequent escape of Jack, and the news had filled him with alarm, being satisfied that the youth had resolved to commence active operations against him. Should the tramp and Mrs. Warren and Jack meet, he foresaw exposure and financial ruin, and in his wild alarm he determined to remove the tramp even though murder became necessary.

An hour passed after our hero had entered the deserted cabin, and then stealthily Blandry approached. No Indian ever moved with greater caution. The man went forward like a rabbit, stopping every few steps to look around, and at length he arrived at the cabin door. He peeped in; there lay the tramp on his face. He was motionless and, as Blandry imagined, breathing heavily, like a man in sound slumber. The intending assassin determined to make sure; he was resolved to take no chances. He took a final peep around outside. No one was in sight—it would have been strange if any one had been at that particular spot. Blandry stepped inside. He had drawn his pistol and held it in his hand, having previously cocked it. The man's intention at the moment was undisguised. Slowly and noiselessly he approached the supposed sleeping tramp, then he bent over him. The pistol was held close to the man's back, right over his heart. There followed a smothered report, then a second. The tramp lay motionless; he had not moved. It appeared that the two balls had gone directly through his heart. With a face pale and ghastly Blandry stole forth from the hut. At the door he met a man. The assassin's heart stood still. He had committed one murder; he had no heart to commit a second. All his wicked energy had been expended in the one deed of blood. He was about ten feet from the entrance to the hut when the man confronted him and demanded:

“What have you been doing in there?”



In trembling tones Blandry announced:

"I am looking for my dog."

"I heard a shot. Man, did you shoot your dog or have you committed a murder?"

Blandry was speechless. It appeared that he had been tracked and discovered. In seeking to flee from one ill, as usually happens he had rushed into a greater evil. He became desperate; indeed, the appalling position made him at length more resolute. He appeared to reason, and to reason quickly, that having committed one crime it was necessary to commit a second in order to cover up the first. Alas! how often the same reasoning leads to a succession of crimes. To be safe one must avoid the first crime. The desperate man drew his revolver, still smoking as it were after sending its death-dealing missile through one heart, but the man who had confronted Blandry was evidently well prepared. He exclaimed:

"Hold on! don't attempt to shoot. I have you covered. Move, and you are a dead man."

Murderers fear death. They are as a rule the biggest cowards on earth; indeed, only a coward is capable of committing a murder in cold blood. Brave men do not commit murders; cowards do. There was something in the tones of the man who had confronted Blandry which spoke of courage, coolness, and determination. Blandry's momentary resolution failed him. He was a rich man, and money goes a great way. He had great sums of money. There might remain a chance for him, and when the stranger commanded, "Hold up your hands," Blandry's hands went up. A momentary saving of his life was a gain. When Blandry's hands were raised and he stood there helpless before the man who had detected him in his crime, there followed an interval of silence, broken at length by the stranger, who demanded:



"What have you done? Have you added to your crimes?"

"Who are you?" demanded the manufacturer.

"You would not know who I am were I to tell you my name."

"What brought you here?"

"Cannot you guess?"

"I cannot."

"I am on your track."

"You are on my track?"

"I am."

"Who are you?" in trembling tones demanded Blandry.

"I am a detective. Villain, I have been on your track for months. I just heard two shots. I fear you have killed my partner."

"Your partner?"

"Yes; my partner was disguised as a tramp. He had a talk with you this evening under his disguise. I was present as a witness, hidden near the spot. My partner came here. You followed him. I followed you. I did not think you would commit murder, but I fear you have murdered my partner. If so this is your second murder. We were trailing you for the first crime."

When these terrible words fell upon Blandry's ears all hope fled from the guilty man. He would have placed his pistol at his own breast, but the detective said:

"Wretch, there is one chance for you."

"One chance for me?"

"Yes."

"How?"

"I'll tell you: we have reason to believe that Jasper Warren still lives. Is that true?"

"And if he does?"

"There is a chance for you."

"But your partner?"



"My partner is only wounded. He still lives."

"He does?"

"Yes."

"How do you know?"

"He has signaled to me. But you are my prisoner. Do not struggle or offer resistance or I will wound you without killing. It is my purpose to capture you alive."

The stranger advanced. Blandry was weak and trembling; he had not the power to offer a resistance. He was completely undone. The detective seized him, and ere the manufacturer was aware he was disarmed and handcuffed.

"You are my prisoner," said the detective.

"What will you do with me?"

"You are a rich man."

"Will you take money?"

"Yes."

"How much money do you want?"

"You must first confess. Is Jasper Warren living or dead?"

Blandry made no reply.

"You may as well answer me. You will be compelled to do so sooner or later."

"I know nothing about Jasper Warren."

"It is useless for you to declare you know nothing about him. You are responsible for his death. It is possible my partner may die. Then you may be called upon to answer for two murders."

"Jasper Warren lives."

"Aha! we thought so. Where is he?"

Blandry made no reply.

"You may as well tell."

"If he lives what am I to expect?"

"That depends."

"Upon what?"



"Upon Jasper Warren's own decision."

"I know nothing about him."

"A moment ago you said he lived."

"I only guess so. I believe he ran away. He lives somewhere."

The man who had announced himself as a detective determined upon a business method of action. He bound Blandry hands and feet, secured him so he could not move, and then went away. He proceeded direct to the town and went straight to the home of the squire. He entered the squire's presence and told a strange and wonderful tale. The squire secured the services of an attorney and also of the constable, and with the stranger proceeded to the hut. They were put in a position where they could overhear all that was said. Then the detective again approached Blandry, who lay helpless upon the ground. He said:

"Blandry, it is lucky for you my partner lives. He will recover. I have had it from his own lips. Now, then, it is your last chance. Where is Jasper Warren?"

"I know nothing about him."

"You may as well answer. You can be put in jail for your murderous attempt on my partner."

Blandry was all undone; his mind had lost all its sustaining powers, and he muttered:

"If I confess and tell where Warren is he will claim all my wealth."

"He will claim it anyway. But see here; I will promise you that there shall be a compromise. Come, man, remember what a miserable life you have led. Why not confess? Tell all; let peace come back to you."

"How can peace come back to me?"

"I promise that you shall not be prosecuted if you confess now."

"What right have you to promise?"



"I represent Mrs. Warren. She has given me power to promise."

Blandry appeared to meditate. He was indeed in a bad way; in fact, he discerned that under all the circumstances there was no hope for him save in the line of pardon and compromise. He did not stop at the moment to consider the extraordinary situation. He believed that he had indeed wounded a man, that disgrace and punishment threatened him, but he remained obdurate, stoutly denying all knowledge of the whereabouts of Jasper Warren. The detective walked away and held a consultation with the squire. The latter advised a certain line of action, but the detective prevailed. The constable was left near by to watch Blandry while the detective, the squire, and attorney went away. They went direct to Blandry's home, the detective leading the way. Once in the house a search commenced, and after about an hour a wonderful discovery was made. Jasper Warren, alive and in comparatively good health, was found confined a prisoner in a vault under the house. The prison had been most ingeniously arranged. There were many facts connected with the imprisonment not necessary to detail. Lights were carried down to the vault, and then the detective threw off his disguise and Jack Warren stood disclosed before his father. He told a strange tale, repeated the history of his life since his disappearance from the town, and then he told how he had tricked Blandry. He related how he had entered the hut, had removed the disguise as a tramp, and had made it into a dummy man; how he had escaped unseen from the hut and assumed a second disguise; how Blandry had shot the dummy through the back, and how he had afterward confronted the man who supposed himself to be a murderer.

Having told his experience, Jack said:



“The question now arises, What shall we do?”

The squire said:

“You have shown so great courage and sense we will hear what you have to suggest.”

Jack made a proposition. He said:

“My father has worked hard, and since this man abused him has suffered a great deal. He needs rest; he cannot in my opinion carry on the business. I propose that Blandry be brought here and that my father formally sell out his interest to the man. We will have a sum sufficient for all our wants—a fortune. That is my proposition, father. What do you think of it?”

Jasper Warren approved the plan. He did indeed need rest. He did not desire, as he said, to take up the cares of business. He had worked hard all his life, and furthermore he did not desire to pursue the man who had wronged him; not that he felt any pity or sympathy for Blandry, but on his own account; a prosecution would entail trouble and distress. He was prepared to accept his son's suggestion.

Jack was dispatched to lead Blandry to his home, and the constable acted as guard. On the way Jack revealed to the man as much as he deemed necessary, and later Blandry was led into the presence of his victim and the squire and attorney. He was as a matter of course completely broken up. He was at the mercy of the man he had wronged and consequently acceded to any proposition that was made. As a result a large sum was agreed upon which was to be paid to Jasper Warren, and for excellent reasons it was decided among all hands that nothing should ever be said concerning the thrilling *dénouement*. Papers were drawn up and signed, and it was agreed that Jasper Warren should leave town with his son and that for five years it should not be made known that he was



alive. There were many reasons why this course was decided upon and made satisfactory to all hands. It was agreed that Blandry's guilt should never be disclosed, and for this there were very satisfactory reasons; not that they concerned Blandry, but others who were innocent people. Indeed, it was entirely in the interest of the latter that a compromise was agreed upon.

After all the papers had been signed, that very night, under cover of the darkness, Jack and his father once more left the town, and on the following evening they arrived at the place where Mrs. Warren had been in hiding, indulging her terrors and hoping almost against hope that all would go well.

Jack entered the presence of his mother alone. The noble woman threw her arms about him and gave way to her emotion, and when she was somewhat calmed down Jack said:

"Mother, I have very startling news."

The mother turned deathly pale, and Jack continued:

"I have positive evidence that father still lives."

We will not describe what followed, but later husband and wife were clasped in each other's arms, and if ever happiness filled the hearts of three mortals it certainly filled the hearts of the Warren family at that moment.

We have little more to tell. Jack is to-day a man of family, and as love arises when two young people meet under unexpected circumstances, so it arose in the heart of Jack and the daughter of Engineer Sanford that night when at the supper-table Jack met for the first time Alec Sanford's pretty daughter, and she, listening to the story of Jack's heroic conduct, made him her hero from the first moment of their meeting, and he is her hero to-day.

We will close with the statement that he is a great rail-



way magnate, a generous and open-hearted man, beloved of all the employees of the road, and at heart the same brave, quick-witted Jack that he was on the eventful night when, as recorded, he told Alec Sanford when he saw the white light to "let her spin."

THE END.

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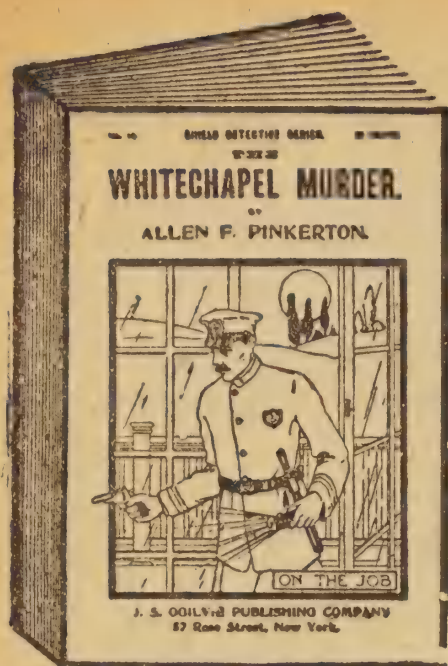
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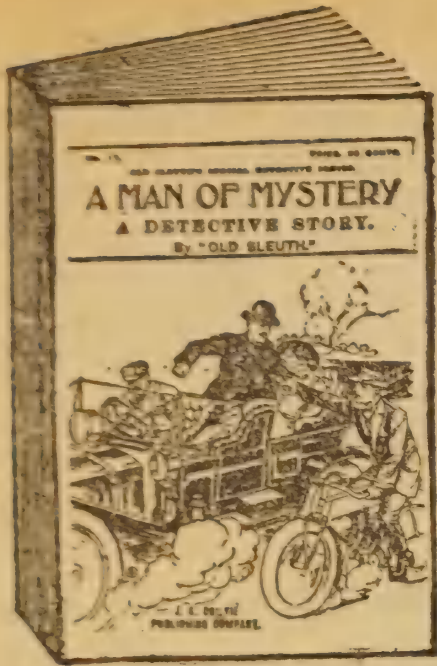
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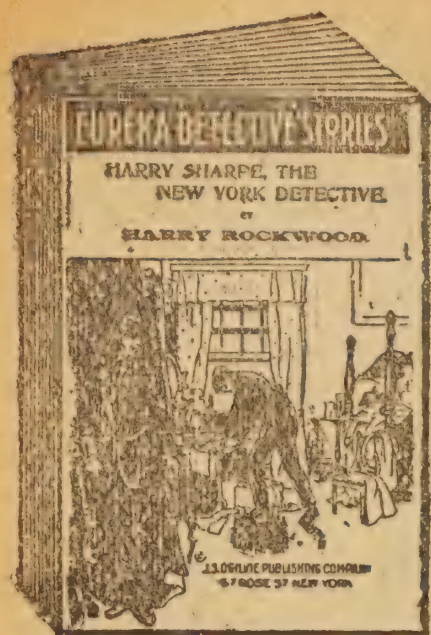
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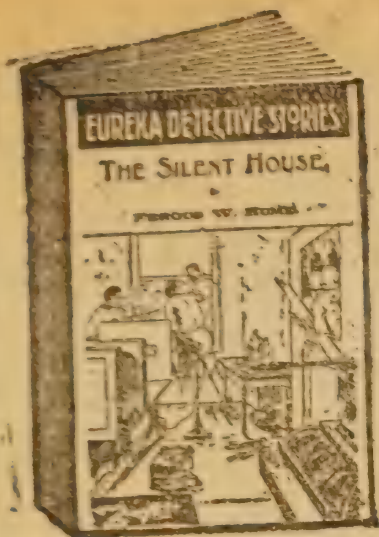
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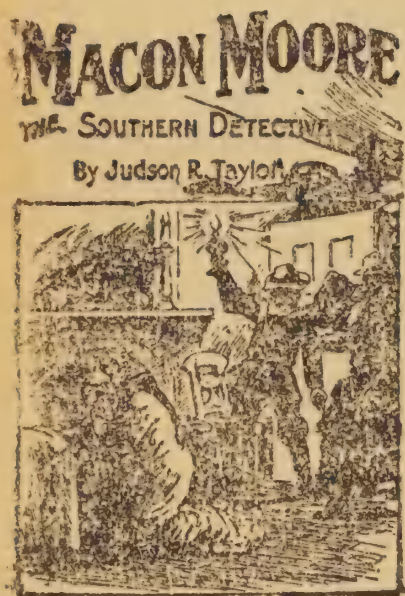
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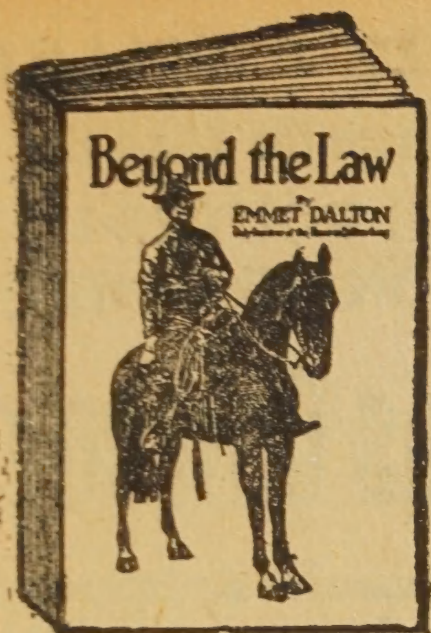
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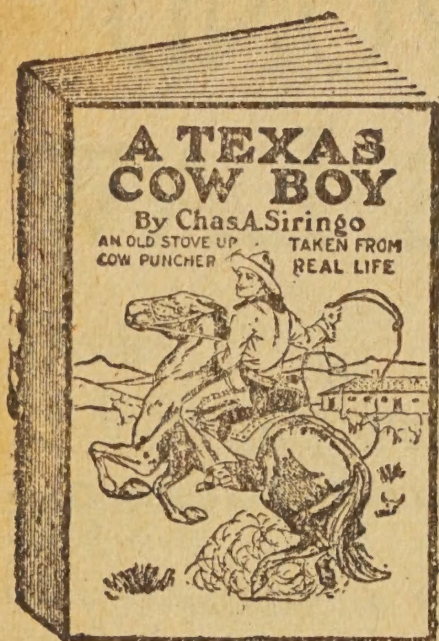


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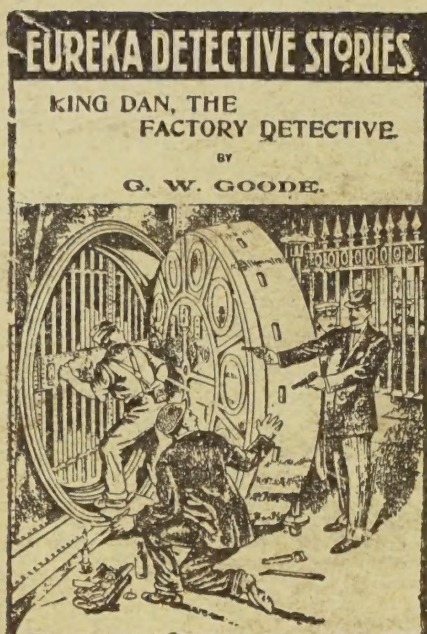
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